

JADAVPUR JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

23

Robert Antoine S.J	The Technique of Oral Composition in the <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i>	1
Ron D.K. Banerjee	The Dantean Waste Land : Structure and Allegory	19
Mythili Kaul	Bhavabhūti's <i>Uttararāmacaritam</i> and Shakespeare's <i>The Winter's Tale</i> : Two Versions of Romance	40
K.S. Ramamurti	Indian Novels in English and English Translations of Indian Novels : A Comparative Note	49
Swapan Majumdar	Comparative Literature : Western Critical Premises and Indian Literary Practices	63
Shair Kumar Das	The Poet and the People : Medieval Indian Literature	73
Alok Bhalla	The Geometry of Pain : On the Discontinuous and Fragmentary Structures of the Gothic Novel with Special Reference to James Hogg, Maturin and Mrs Radcliffe	87
C.T. Indra	The Poem as an Expanded Metaphor	131
Maeve Hughes IBVM	Epic Women	141
Lakshmi Kannan	Translations in English : A Note on the Problems and Prospectives	154
Jaldev	Pastiche and Contemporary Fiction	160

1985

Editor
Amiya Dev

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
CALCUTTA

ISSN 0448-1143

**Founded by
Buddhadeva Bose**

**Editor
1961-63 : Buddhadeva Bose
1964-82 : Naresh Guha**

**Editorial Board
Manabendra Bandyopadhyay Amiya Dev
Swapn Majumdar Subir Ray Choudhuri**

Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature is an annual publication of the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University. All communications (articles, bibliographical data, notes and other items) should be sent to the Editor, and all subscriptions to the Registrar, Jadavpur University, Calcutta 700032, India.

Price : 15.00 / \$ 3.50

Published by Arunkumar Gupta, Registrar, Jadavpur University and printed by Suresh Dutta at Modern Printers, 12 Ulladanga Main Road, Calcutta 700 067,

THE TECHNIQUE OF ORAL COMPOSITION IN THE RĀMĀYAṆA*

Robert Antoine S.J.

9

Three adjectives are always used in the nom. sing. masc. The first, *śrīmān* (— —), comes at the end of a and c, the two preceding syllables having the metrical pattern v —. In this position it occurs 138 times. Thus :

gateṣu pṛthivīṣeṣu rājā Daśarathaḥ punaḥ |
praviveśa purīm śrīmān puraskṛtya dvijottamān || 1.17.4
sa yātvā dūram adhvānam supariśrāntavāhanaḥ |
uvāca Bharataḥ śrīmān Vasiṣṭhaṁ mantriṇām varam || 2.87.6
taṁ dṛṣtvā Bharataḥ śrīmān duḥkhamohapariplutaḥ |
abhyadhāvata dharmātmā Bharataḥ Kekayīsutaḥ || 2.93.28
tān dṛṣtvā Rāghavaḥ śrīmān āgatām tāṁ ca rākṣasīm |
abraviḍ bhrātaram Rāmo Lakṣmaṇam diptatejasam || 3.20.3
evam uktas tu dharmātmā vānaraiḥ savibhaiṣaṇaiḥ |
abraviḍ Rāghavaḥ śrīmān sasugrīvavibhīṣaṇān || 6.110.18

The second, *vīryavān* (— v —) comes at the end of b and d and is always preceded by a word ending in a short syllable. In the structure 5 + 3 it appears at least 94 times. A few examples :

evam uktvā tato Rāmo dhanur ādāya vīryavān |
Lakṣmaṇānucaras tasthau samuddhṛtya śarottamam || 6.47.31
tato Rāmo mahātejā dhanur ādāya vīryavān |
kriṣṇam mahākāyam Kumbhakarnaṁ dadarśa ha || 6.49.1
tato Rāmo mahātejā dhanur ādāya vīryavān |
praviśya rākṣasam sainyam śaravarṣam vavarṣa ha || 6.81.15
bhāṣākurṇaśca saṁkruddhaḥ śūlam ādāya vīryavān |
ekatuḥ kapiśūrdūlam yaśasvinam avasthītam || 5.44.32

The third, *pratāpavān* (v — v —), comes at the end of b and d in the structure 4 + 4 and is often preceded by either a proper name or a

* These are Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 of the late Father Robert Antoine's unfinished book, *The Technique of Oral Composition in the Rāmāyaṇa*—a follow-up of what was printed in the last number.

noun of four syllables. In this position it occurs at least 34 times. Thus :

Vikukṣes tu *mahātejā* Bāṇaḥ putraḥ *pratāpavān* /
 Bāṇasya tu mahātēja Anarāṇyaḥ *pratāpavān* // 1.69.20
 Sitāyā *vacanam śrutvā* Daśagrīvaḥ *pratāpavān* /
 haste hastam samāhṛtya cakāra sumahad vapuḥ // 3.47.1
 sa tribhir *nairṛtaśreṣṭhair* yugapat samabhidrutaḥ /
 na vivyathe *mahātejā* Vāliputraḥ *pratāpavān* // 6.56.12

The epithets of the same metrical pattern (v – v –) and having the same meaning occupy the second half of b and d in the structure 4 + 4. The first, *parantapa*, does not occur in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* and is usually preceded by a word ending in a vowel. The second, *arindama*, is always preceded by a word ending in a consonant, as otherwise its initial vowel would form *sandhi* with a preceding final vowel and change its metrical pattern. Both are mostly used in the nom., voc. and acc. sing.

parantapa occurs at least 72 times. A few examples :

atha nātra *naravyāghrau* rājaputrau *parantapau* /
 anye rāmopamāḥ santi vyaktam atra *tapasvinaḥ* // 2.87.23
 evam uktvā *mahābāhur* Agastyam sūryavarcasam /
 jagrāha paramapritas tasya pāḍau *parantapaḥ* // 3.11.21
 Puṣkarākṣa *mahābāho* mahāvākṣaḥ *parantapa* /
 diṣṭyā kṛtam idaṁ karma tvayā *śastrabhṛtām* vara // 6.107.2

arindama occurs at least 79 times. Thus :

tataḥ prabhāte vimale Viśvāmitram *mahāmuniḥ* /
 uvāca Rāghavo vākyam kṛtāhnikam *arindamaḥ* // 1.44.4
 tasya tad *vacanam śrutvā* Saumitrir vividhān drumān /
 ajahāra tataścakre parṇasālām *arindamaḥ* // 2.50.14
 tāṁ rātriṁ uṣitam Rāmaṁ sukhotthitam *arindamam* /
 abravīt prāñjalir vākyam jayam prṣṭvā *Vibhīṣaṇaḥ* // 6.109.1
 adya tvām upayāsyanti jahi kopam *arindama* /
 koṭyo'nekās tu *Kākutsṭha* kapinām *dīptatejasām* // 4.34.22

There is another doublet for the end of b and d : the first alterna-

tive is *vikrama* (– v –) and the second *parākrama* (v – v –). Both can be used as separate words, but they mostly appear in a compounded form. At the end of b or d *vikrama* occurs 160 times and *parākrama* 125 times. The following examples are chosen with a view to showing how the bard can choose either of the two forms according to the structure of the *pāda*.

structure 3 + 5	structure 2 + 6
satya – vikrama (14)	satya – parākrama (35)
bhīma – „ (36)	bhīma – „ (7)
tulya – „ (2)	tulya – „ (13)
laghu – „ (20)	laghu – „ (2)
caṇḍa – „ (2)	caṇḍa – „ (1)
ḍṛḍha – „ (9)	ḍṛḍha – „ (1)

Structure 0 + 8 : mahendrasama-vikrama (7)
Śakratulya-parākrama (5)

The epithet *satyaparākrama* is mostly applied to Rāma. Thus :

teṣāṃ api mahātejā Rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ /
bālyāt prabhṛti susnigdho Lakṣmaṇo lakṣmivardhanaḥ // 1.17.15
Lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā Rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ /
Viśvāmitras tu dharmātmā mama pitrā supūjitaḥ // 2.110.44
śrasyaṅjalim ādhāya Kaikeyīnandivardhanaḥ /
babhāṣe Bharato jyeṣṭhaṃ Rāmaṃ satyaparākramam // 6.116.1

When the *pāda* begins with three syllables, we have *satyavikrama* :

tasya tad vacanam śrutvā Bharataḥ satyavikramaḥ /
Pāpau gṛhītvā Sugrivaṃ praviveśa tam ālayam // 6.116.42

A third doublet for the end of b and d is supplied by two adjectives meaning 'expert' : *kovida* (– v –) and *viśārada* (v – v –), the first occurring at least 52 times and the second 46 times.

structure 3 + 5	structure 2 + 6
śāstra – kovida (2)	śāstra – viśārada (2)
dharma – „ (3)	dharmu – „ (1)
yuddha – „ (3)	yuddhu – „ (7)
vākya – „ (18)	vākya – „ (18)

This last example is interesting because, in several instances, it reveals the bard's predilection for an easy chime of words :

vākyajño vākyakovidam (5) vākyam vākyaviśāradaḥ (14)

Quoting a few *śloka*s will bring the point home :

tacchrutvā vacanam tasya Viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ |
pratyuvāca Śātānandam vākyajño vākyakovidam || 1.50.10
tacchrutvā Rāghavenoktam vākyam vākyaviśāradaḥ |
pratyuvāca mahātejā Viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ || 1.47.13
evam uktas tu Rāmeṇa Lakṣmaṇaḥ ślakṣṇayā girā |
pratyuvāca tadā Rāmam vākyajño vākyakovidam || 2.28.5
tacchrutvā rākṣasendrasya vākyam vākyaviśāradaḥ |
pratyuvāca mahāprājño Mārīco rākṣaseśvaram || 3.35.1
tacchrutvā paramaprīto Rāmo dharmabhīṣṭam varah |
Vibhiṣaṇam uvācedam vākyajño vākyakovidam || 6.99.35
tacchrutvā Lakṣmaṇenoktam vākyam vākyaviśāradaḥ |
pratyuvāca mahātejāḥ prahasam Rāghavo vacah || 7.78.1

Compounds ending with – *indriya* (– v –) occur at least 64 times at the end of b and d. They can be made to fit three different structures :

structure 4 + 4 : x x x x jitendriya (21)

structure 3 + 5 : x x x vijitendriya (8)

ajitendriya (5)

niyatendriya (6)

prayatendriya (1)

vyathitendriya (6)

kaluṣendriya (1)

kṣubhitendriya (3)

vyākulendriya (6)

calitendriya (3)

structure 2 + 6 : x x saṅkulitendriya (1)

vyākulitendriya (2)

abbihatendriya (1)

pracalitendriya (1)

a few examples :

- *tam uvāca tato Brahmā na tāvat tvam jltendriyaḥ* /
yatasva muniśārdūla ityuktvā tridivam gataḥ // 1.62.21
- *satyavādī maheṣvāso vṛddhasevī jltendriyaḥ* /
vatsaḥ śreyasi jātas te diṣṭyāsau tava Rāghavaḥ // 2.2.29
- *tam apratihataṁ kruddham praviṣṭam puruṣarṣabham* /
Sugrīvo Lakṣmaṇam dṛṣṭvā babhūva vyathitendriyaḥ // 4.33.1
- *bhrātaram nihataṁ dṛṣṭvā Rāvaṇena durātmanā* /
param viṣādam āpanno vilalāpākulendriyaḥ // 6.89.6
- *upalabhya cirāt samjñāṁ rājā rākṣasapuṅgavaḥ* /
putraśokārdito dīno vilalāpākulendriyaḥ // 6.80.5

10

A few compounds are used regularly in the description of persons. Their last member denotes either the body or a part of the body. They are classified as follows :

end of a and c

- *aṅga* (*aṅgī*)
- *akṣa* (*akṣī*)

end of b and d

- *ikṣaṇa* (*ikṣanā*)
- *locana* (*locanā*)
- *ānana* (*ānanā*)
- *darśana* (*darśanā*)

Compounds ending in - *aṅga* (*aṅgī*) at the end of a and c occur 87 times. The main forms are :

- *sarvāṅga* (*gī*) (14)

- cāru* - "
- śubha* - "
- vihvalita* - "
- śopitāpluta* - "
- rudhiradigdha* - "
- rudhirokṣita* - "
- śaraveṣṭita* - "
- manmathāviṣṭa* - "
- pāṁṣugunṭhita* - "

– *digdhāṅga* (gī) (10)

mala –	„
śoṇita –	„
kṣataja –	„
divyacandana –	„
māṃsaśoṇita –	„
malamaṇḍala –	„
rudhirasrāva –	„

– *citrāṅga* (gī) (7)

kāñcana –	„
sphaṭika –	„
vikṛta –	„
divyābharāṇa –	„

– *vicitrāṅga* (gī) (3)

muktāmaṇi –	„
nānāvarṇa –	„
maṇihema –	„

– *parītāṅga* (gī) (5)

śoka –	„
roṣa –	„
bhaya –	„
dhūmenābhi –	„

Besides we find : rudhirasiktāṅga (3)

anavadyāṅgī (3)

tapobalavisuddhāṅgī (1)

Compounds ending in – *akṣa* (*akṣī*) at the end of a and e occur 168 times. The main instances are :

Sahasrākṣa (a name of Indra) (24)– *tāmrākṣa* (5)

su –	„	(1)
roṣa –	„	(5)
krodha –	„	(3)
rājīva –	„	(2)

dviguṇa – tāmrākṣa	(1)
roṣarodana –	„ (1)
madavihvala –	„ (1)
– patrākṣa (kṣī)	
kamala –	„ (24)
nalina –	„ (1)
utpala –	„ (1)
padmadala –	„ (1)
– viśālākṣa (kṣī)	(45)
padmapatra –	„ (2)
puṇḍarīka –	„ (3)
– pūrṇākṣa (kṣī)	
aśru –	„ (2)
bāṣpa –	„ (2)
bāṣpapari –	„ (2)
mṛgaśāvākṣī	(11)
virūpākṣa	(12)

Compounds ending in – *īkṣaṇa* (*īkṣaṇā*) at the end of b and d occur 80 times. The main instances are :

asitekṣaṇa (ṇā)	(13)
āyatekṣaṇa (ṇā)	(6)
madirekṣaṇa (ṇā)	(4)
kopasaṃvartitekṣaṇa	(3)
– nibhekṣaṇa (ṇā)	
padma –	„ (5)
śatapatra –	„ (2)
puṇḍarīka –	„ (1)
padmapatra –	„ (2)
mṛgaśāva –	„ (1)
– paryākulekṣaṇa (ṇā)	
bāṣpa –	„ (8)
harṣa –	„ (1)
krodha –	„ (2)
bāṣpa – vyākulekṣaṇa	(2)

– *visphāritekṣaṇa*

roṣa –	„	(1)
tāmra –	„	(1)
krodha –	„	(2)

Compounds ending in – *locana* (*locanā*) at the end of b and d occur 81 times. The main instances are :

trilocana	(4)
āyatalocana (nā)	(6)
kamalalocana (nā)	(6)
rājivalocana	(11)
raktalocana	(2)
raktāntalocana	(4)
utphullalocana	(2)
vāmalocana	(2)

– *saṃraktalocana*

kopa –	„	(5)
krodha –	„	(3)

– *vyākulalocana* (nā)

śoka –	„	(1)
bāṣpa –	„	(2)
bāṣpa – duṣitalocana		(1)

Compounds ending in – *ānana* (*ānanā*) at the end of b and d occur 107 times. The main instances are :

– *Daśānana* (a name of Rāvaṇa) (35)

(see Chapter 7)

vikṛtānana (nā)	(11)
rucirānana (nā)	(5)
varānanā	(5)
śubhānana (nā)	(5)
jvalitānana (nā)	(2)

– *nibhānana* (nā)

śaśi –	„	(4)
candra –	„	(2)
pūrṇacandra –	„	(13)

bālacandra – <i>nibhānana</i> (nā)	(1)
cārucandra – „	(1)
tārādhīpa – „	(5)
taruṇārka – „	(3)
vajra – „	(1)
pūrnendusaḍṛaśānana	(2)
bālasūryasamānana	(1)
pātālavipulānana	(1)

The word *darśana* does not denote a part of the body but, at the end of a compound, it indicates the appearance or the countenance of a person. Hence, it has been included in this chapter. Compounds ending in – *darśana* (*darśanā*) at the end of b or d occur 120 times. The main instances are :

– *darśana* (nā)

su – „	(3)
cāru – „	(3)
krūra – „	(2)
priya – „	(30)
ghora – „	(25)
bhīma – „	(13)
śubha – „	(11)
saumya – „	(1)
puṇya – „	(1)
adbhuta – „	(11)
vikṛta – „	(1)
gambhīra – „	(1)
romaharṣaṇa – „	(1)
dīnaviklava – „	(1)

A few *ślokas* quoted in full will illustrate the use of the above formulae :

- tad dhanur *naraśārdūla* Maithilasya *mahātmanah* /
tatra drakṣyusi *Kākutstha* yajñaṃ *cādbhutadarśanam* // 1.30.11
- evam prṣṭas tu *Kalkeyyā* priyaṃ *pārthivanandanah* /
ācēṣṭa Bharataḥ sarvaṃ māt্রে *raṅgivalocanah* // 2.66.7

- *evam ukta tu Rāmeṇa bāṣpaparyākulekṣaṇā* /
Kausalyā putrasokārtā Rāmaṃ vacanam abravīt // 2.21.24
- *gamiṣye yatra Kākutsthaḥ svasti te'stu varānane* /
rakṣantu tvāṃ viśālākṣi samagrā vanadevatāḥ // 3.43.30
- *tasya tad vacanam śrutvā girirājasya dhīmataḥ* /
uvāca Dundubhir vākyam krodhāt samraktalocanaḥ // 1.11.18
- *māṃsaṣṇitadigdhāṅgīr māṃsaṣṇitabhojanāḥ* /
tā dadarśa kapiśreṣṭho romaharṣaṇadarśanāḥ // 5.15.17
- *prapīḍya śaravarṣeṇa rākṣasaṃ bhīmadarśanām* /
nijaghāna Virūpakṣam śareṇaikena Lakṣmaṇaḥ // 6.33.25
- *Mahendram atha samprāpya Rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ* /
adhyārohan mahābāhuḥ śikharam drumabhūṣitam // 6.4.63
- *rājendrāmala padmākṣa pūrṇacandranibhānana* /
atulaṃ te balaṃ yena Daśagrīvas tvayā jitaḥ // 7.33.14

11

The idea of kingship is conveyed, at the end of b and d, by two words : *pārthiva* (–v–) and compounds ending with *adhipa* which, in combination with a preceding word ending in –a, becomes –*ādhipa* (–v–). *pārthiva* at the end of b and d occurs 45 times and is used in those cases which have three syllables.

Compounds ending in –*adhipa* occur 147 times and are mostly used in the nom., voc. and acc. sing. They fit different structures :

structure 4 + 4 :	×	×	×	×	narādhipa	(36)
					janādhipa	(3)
					surādhipa	(1)
structure 3 + 5 :	×	×	×	×	vasudhādhipa	(8)
					manujādhipa	(2)
					Mithilādhipa	(4)
					Haibayādhipa	(2)
					Kekayādhipa	(2)
					Plagavādhipa	(6)
					vānarādhipa	(10)
					rākṣasādhipa	(63)

The latter, *rākṣasādhipa*, is often preceded by *Rāvaṇa* :

Rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ (28)
Rāvaṇam rākṣasādhipam (9)
Rāvaṇe rākṣasādhiṇe (1)

As an alternative form of *rākṣasādhipa* at the end of b and d we find *rākṣadesvara* (51).

Three synonyms fitting three different structures appear at the end of b and d :

structure 5 + 3 : x x x x v *rākṣasa* (sī) (202)
structure 4 + 4 : x x x x *niṣācara* (133)
structure 3 + 5 : x x x *rajanīcara* (20)

Two adjectives bearing a similar meaning are used at the end of b and d in different structures :

druga occurs 74 times at the end of b and d :

structure 5 + 3 : x x x x v dāruṇa (18)
structure 4 + 4 : x x x x sudāruṇa (41)
structure 3 + 5 : x x x bhṛsadāruṇa (2)
 atidāruṇa (4)
structure 2 + 6 : x x paramadāruṇa (6)

***romaharṣaṇa* (*lomaharṣaṇa*) occurs 33 times in the structure 3 + 5.**

At the end of b and d two epithets are of frequent occurrence :

- *vatsala* mainly used in a compounded form. It occurs 43 times :

- vatsala

dharma	—	„	(16)
bhrātṛ	—	„	(10)
pitṛ	—	„	(1)
nṛpa	—	„	(1)
putra	—	„	(2)
mitra	—	„	(2)
guru	—	„	(1)
sarva	—	„	(1)
oṁitra	—	„	(1)
brāhmaṇa	—	„	(1)

– *dṛḍhavrata* (v – v –) appears 21 times at the end of b and d.

A few examples :

- *sa dadarśa mahātmānaṃ Janakaṃ dharmavatsalam* /
so'bhivādya Satānandaṃ rājānaṃ cāpi dhārmikam // 1.69.7
- *evam uktvā tu dharmātmā Bharato bhrātṛvatsalaḥ* /
samīpastham uvācedam Sumantraṃ mantrakovidam // 2.76.19
- *tataḥ prahṛṣṭo dharmātmā pitā me Mithilādhipaḥ* /
avāpto vipulām ṛddhiṃ mām avāpya narādhipaḥ // 2.110.31
- *athānyad vapur ādāya dāruṇaṃ lomahaṣṇam* /
niṣpapātā mahātejāḥ Kumbhakarṇo mahābalaḥ // 6.53.33
- *tacchrutvā rākṣasendrasya vākyaṃ vākyaaviśāradaḥ* /
pratyuvāca mahāprājño Mārīco rākṣaseśvaram // 3.35.1
- *yāte tasmin Daśagrīve rākṣasyo vikṛtānanāḥ* /
Sītāṃ nirbhatsayāmāsur vākyaīḥ krūraiḥ sudaruṇaiḥ // 5.56.70

12

Four words standing at the end of compounds convey the meaning 'looking like' or 'having the radiance of'. Their metrical pattern determines their position in the *śloka*.

end of a and c

– *prakhya* (– –)

– *saṃkāśa* (– – –)

end of b and d

– *prabha* (v –)

– *sannibha* (– v –)

– *prakhya* at the end of a and c occurs 41 times, and *prabha* at the end of b and d, 106 times

– *prakhya*

amara –	„	(2)
adbhuta –	„	(2)
amṛta –	„	(1)
ambara –	„	(1)
acala –	„	(1)
kuñjara –	„	(2)
māruta –	„	(1)

– *prabha*

su –	„	(3)
niṣ –	„	(1)
hata –	„	(2)
amara –	„	(1)
amita –	„	(11)
atula –	„	(4)
dyotita –	„	(4)
kanaka –	„	(2)
kāñcana –	„	(2)
rajata –	„	(1)

			nirmala – <i>prabha</i>	(1)
			rucira – „	(3)
			aśani – „	(4)
	surucira – <i>prakhya</i>	(4)	surucira – „	(2)
Śakradhanuḥ –	„	(1)	Indradhanuḥ – „	(1)
Indrāśani –	„	(1)	maṇivara – „	(1)
homagiri –	„	(1)	prajvalita – „	(1)
Kailāśadikhara –	„	(1)	Kailāśaśikhara – „	(1)
nilāñjanacaya –	„	(1)	nilāñjanacaya – „	(1)
abhra – ghanaprabhya	(1)			
megha –	„	(1)		
nāśamegha –	„	(1)		
śaradābhra –	„	(1)		
pāṇḍurābhra –	„	(1)	pāṇḍurābhra – ghanaprabha	(1)

– *samaprabha*

agni –	„	(1)
Śakra –	„	(1)
sūrya –	„	(2)
bhāskara –	„	(1)
bālasūrya –	„	(2)
hutāśana –	„	(3)
sūryodaya –	„	(2)
Śakrāśani –	„	(2)
yugāntāgni –	„	(1)
pradīptāgni –	„	(1)
jvalitāgni –	„	(1)
śaradindu –	„	(1)
padmakōṣa –	„	(1)
raviraśmi –	„	(1)
sūryaraśmi –	„	(1)
candraraśmi –	„	(1)

– *saṃkūṣa* at the end of a and c occurs 200 times, and *sannibha* at the end of b and d, 84 times. Examples have been chosen with a view to showing that the bard can use identical compounds at the end of a *pāda*, provided he retains *saṃkūṣa* for the end of a and c, and *sannibha* for the end of b and d.

end of a and c – <i>saṃkāśa</i>			end of b and d – <i>sannibha</i>		
deva –	„	(10)	deva –	„	(1)
giri –	„	(4)	giri –	„	(4)
śaśi –	„	(1)	śaśi –	„	(2)
megha –	„	(13)	megha –	„	(1)
sūrya –	„	(13)	sūrya –	„	(10)
vajra –	„	(3)	vajra –	„	(1)
candra –	„	(4)	candra –	„	(1)
ghora –	„	(9)			
bhīma –	„	(3)			
divya –	„	(5)			
siṃha –	„	(5)			
śaila –	„	(3)			
pāvaka –	„	(6)	pāvaka –	„	(1)
āditya –	„	(6)	āditya –	„	(2)
acala –	„	(2)	acala –	„	(1)
amara –	„	(2)	amara –	„	(1)
rajata –	„	(2)	rajata –	„	(2)
parvata –	„	(10)	parvata –	„	(8)
jvalana –	„	(1)	jvalana –	„	(1)
sphaṭika –	„	(1)	sphaṭika –	„	(1)
adbhuta –	„	(4)			
candramaṇḍala –	„	(1)	candramaṇḍala –	„	(2)
taruṇāditya –	„	(4)	taruṇāditya –	„	(3)
nīlajīmūta –	„	(6)	nīlajīmūta –	„	(2)
diptapāvaka –	„	(3)	diptapāvaka –	„	(1)
daityadānava –	„	(1)	daityadānava –	„	(1)
sāgarodgāra –	„	(1)	sāgarodgāra –	„	(1)
mahendradhvaja –	„	(1)	mahendrāśani –	„	(1)
añjanāmbuda –	„	(1)	pāṇḍurāmbuda –	„	(1)
merumandara –	„	(4)			
vidhyamandara –	„	(1)			
snigdhavaidūrya –	„	(3)			
snigdhapallava –	„	(1)			

A few *śloka*s will show how various formulae are harmoniously combined into easy sentences :

- *sa vanam ghorasamkāśam dṛṣṭvā nṛpavarātmajah |*
aviprahataṃ Aikṣvākaḥ papraccha munipuṅgavam || 1.23.11
- *Qautumasya naraśreṣṭha pūrvam āsīn mahātmanah |*
Adramo divyasamkāśah surair api supūjitaḥ || 1.47.15
- *mahendradhvajasamkāśam kva nu śete mahābhujah |*
bhujam pariḡhasamkāśam upadhāya mahābalaḥ || 2.55.7
- *keold rajatasamkāśāḥ kecit kṣatajasannibhāḥ |*
pītamāñjīṣṭhavarṇāśca kecin maṇivaraprabhāḥ || 2.88.5
- *ito vāsanti dharmātmā Śarabhaṅgaḥ pratāpavān |*
adhyardhajojane tāta maharṣiḥ sūryasannibhaḥ || 3.3.22
- *to baldhakasamkāśā mahānādā mahābalaḥ |*
abhyadhāvanta kākutsītham Rāmaṃ yuddhe jighāṃsavaḥ || 3.24.8
- *tatas te'ñjanasamkāśā gires tasmān mahājavāḥ |*
tiṣraḥ koṭyaḥ plavaṅgānām niryayur yatra Rāghavaḥ || 4.36.20
- *padmakadarasamkāśas taruṇārkanibhānanaḥ |*
huddhimān vānaraśreṣṭhaḥ sarvavānarasattamaḥ || 4.38.16
- *Rāghavaśca mayā dṛṣṭaś caturdantaṃ mahāgajam |*
Arūḍhaḥ śailasamkāśam cacāra sahalakṣmaṇah || 5.25.12
- *taṃ dṛṣtvācalasamkāśam uvāca Janakātmajā |*
padmapatraviśālākṣī mārutasyaaurasam sutam || 5.35.41
- *ete duṣprasahā rājan balinaḥ kāmārūpiṇah |*
daittyudānavasamkāśā yuddhe devaparākramaḥ || 6.19.3
- *arkamaṇḍalasamkāśam divyam dṛṣṭvā ratham sthitam |*
Aruroha mahābahū Rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ || 6.116.20
- *tatra Hetiḥ Prahetiśca bhrātaraḥ rākṣasaṣṣabhaḥ |*
madhukalābhasamkāśau babhūvatur arindamaḥ || 7.4.14
- *sa dṛṣṭvā sūryasamkāśam jvalantaṃ tva tejasā |*
upaviṣṭam Vasiṣṭhasaya savye pārśve mahāmuniḥ |
taṃ muni tāpasaśreṣṭhaḥ vinītaṣṭvabhyavādayat || 7.50.4

Neuter plurals in *-āni* supply a simple and effective device to fulfil the metrical requirements of all *pādas*. For the second half of a and c such plurals may have either three or four syllables. Those of three syllables have the metrical pattern – – – and are preceded

by a short syllable. Those of four syllables have the metrical pattern v – – – . For the second half of b and d the neuter plurals end with the metrical pattern v – v and are followed by the enclitic *ca*. This device is used innumerable times and only the most frequent instances will be noted :

end of a and c	end of b and d
v bhūtāni	sukhāni ca
v sarvāṇi	vanāni ca
v varṇāni	phalāni ca
v puṣpāṇi	vividhāni ca
v mūlāni	bhūṣaṇāni ca
v citrāṇi	
sahasrāṇi	
mahārḥāṇi	
vicitrāṇi	

Examples :

- upādhyāyavacaḥ śrutvā tasmin sadasi pārthivaḥ /
ṣaṣṭim putrasahasrāṇi vākyam etad uvāca ha // 1.38.11
- maṇimuktāsuvarṇāni ratnāni vividhāni ca /
dadyād Daśaratho rājā mā sma teṣu manaḥ kṛthāḥ // 2.9.20
- muktāmaṇisuvarṇāni vastrānyābharaṇāni ca /
yad yad icchet tad evāsyā deyaṃ macchandato yathā // 3.52.15
- te bhakṣayanto mūlāni phalāni vividhāni ca /
anveṣamāṇā durdharṣā nyavasamstatra tatra ha // 4.47.5
- udyānāni ca ramyāṇi parvatopavanāni ca /
saha rākṣasarājena cara tvam madirekṣaṇe // 5.22.30
- aśvān ratnāni vastrāṇi hastinaśca madotkatān /
candanāni ca divyāni divyānyābharaṇāni ca // 7.38.8
- māmsāni ca vicitrāṇi phalāni vividhāni ca /
Rāmasyābhyavahārārtham kiṅkarās tūrnām āharan // 7.41.14
- ete duṣprasahā ghorāś caṇḍāś caṇḍaparākramāḥ /
aṣṭau śatasahasrāṇi daśa koṭīśatani ca // 6.17.17

Three expressions or idioms are used regularly as verse-fillers according to their metrical pattern :

- at the end of a and c : *bhadraṃ te (vaḥ) – – –*
- at the end of b and d : *na saṃśayaḥ (nātra saṃśayaḥ) v – v –*
- at the end of all *pādas* : adverbial expressions beginning with *yathā –*

– *bhadraṃ te (vaḥ)* occurs 83 times at the end of a and c. It is not found in the *Kiṣkīndhā-kāṇḍa*.

– at the end of b and d :

structure 4 + 4 : × × × × *na saṃśayaḥ* (71)

structure 3 + 5 : × × × *nātra saṃśayaḥ* (15)

– adverbial expressions beginning with *yathā* – are almost equally divided between the end of a or c and the end of b or d, according to their metrical pattern. Such expressions occur 77 times at the end of a and c, and 81 times at the end of b and d. The break-up is as follows :

end of a and c		end of b and c	
<i>yathā</i> – <i>nyāyam</i>	(22)	<i>yathā</i> – <i>vidhi</i>	(13)
„ – <i>kāmam</i>	(12)	„ – <i>sukham</i>	(24)
„ – <i>pūrvam</i>	(1)	„ – <i>puram</i>	(6)
„ – <i>tattvam</i>	(12)	„ – <i>tatham</i>	(4)
„ – <i>vṛttam</i>	(7)	„ – <i>kramam</i>	(3)
„ – <i>kālam</i>	(4)	„ – <i>mati</i>	(2)
„ – <i>tathyam</i>	(3)	„ – <i>balam</i>	(3)
„ – <i>prāṇam</i>	(2)	„ – <i>gatam</i>	(15)
„ – <i>kṣipram</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>daṇḍam</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>śāstram</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>bhāgam</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>bhāvam</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>jñapti</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>rūpam</i>	(2)		
„ – <i>buddhi</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>satyam</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>sattvam</i>	(1)		
„ – <i>bhūtam</i>	(1)		
<i>yathoddiṣṭam</i>	(2)	<i>yathocitam</i>	(3)
		<i>yathepsitam</i>	(2)

Examples :

– *manoratho mahān eṣa Bhagīratha mahāratha /*
evaṃ bhavatu bhadraṃ te kṣvākukulavardhana // 1.41.21

- sarvam etad yathoktam te bhaviṣyati *na saṁśayaḥ* /
vicariṣyanti *bhadram te* devabhūtās *tavātmajāḥ* // 1.46.8
- tato dvijās *dharmajñam* astuvān *pārthivarṣabham* /
anujñātās tataḥ sarve punar jagmur *yathāgatam* // 1.11.20
- sa tvā paśyatu *bhadram te* Rāmaḥ *satyaparākramaḥ* /
sarvān suhṛda āpṛcchya tvām idanīm diḍṛkṣate / 2.31.4
- tam dṛṣṭvā giriśṅgābham *Rāmo Lakṣmaṇam* abravīt /
anena Sītā *Vaidehī* bhakṣitā *nātra saṁśayaḥ* // 3.63.10
- evam bruvāṇam *dharmātmā* Hanūmantam sa *Lakṣmaṇaḥ* /
paripūjya *yathānyāyaṇi* idaṁ provāca *Rāghavam* // 4.4.22
- *Rāvaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā* *Prahasto vūkyam* abravīt /
samāśvasiḥi *bhadram te* na bhīḥ kār्या tvayā kape // 5.48.4
- *Rāvaṇo hi mahāvīro* raṇe *dbhutaparākramaḥ* /
trailokyenāpi saṁkruddho duṣprasahyo *na saṁśayaḥ* / 6.47.47
- samāśvasiḥi *bhadram te* nirbhayo vigatajvaraḥ /
phalamūlāsano vīra vasa ceha *yathāsukham* // 7.80.14

THE DANTEAN WASTE LAND STRUCTURE AND ALLEGORY

Ron D.K. Banerjee

After T.S. Eliot's death, critics have begun the inevitable process of evaluating and summing up his contribution to literature.¹ Dame Helen Gardner has noted² that some of these re-evaluations are unreasonably hostile, as if to redress the balance of the old complacency with which Eliot's reputation had been regarded. But, to adapt Valéry's remark about Victor Hugo, the attempts to destroy him argue strongly for his existence. On the positive side, there has been, as Graham Martin puts it, a shift towards "the relation between his (Eliot's) poetry and his social and cultural diagnoses"³ which has brought to the fore the complex interaction between Eliot's *opus* and contemporary history, aesthetics, philosophy and the poet's biography.

No far, because of the difficult access to facts, the biographical and psychological criticism of Eliot's writings remains either fragmentary or conjectural,⁴ but serious reassessments of his social, aesthetic and philosophical⁵ ideas have emerged. If there is a danger in this movement away from the standard criticism of Eliot's poetry, it seems to lie in the tendency of the revisionists to be as formulaic in their approaches as some of their predecessors. Even when one ignores critics, such as F.W. Bateson,⁶ who have no sympathy for Eliot's aims and methods, there are those who, like Donald Davie, would want to replace a new Eliot for the old. No doubt, some of these new perspectives illuminate aspects of Eliot's work, but often they fail to be "constructive criticism", to borrow Professor Langbaum's phrase, by being too partial and exclusive. The recent criticism of *The Waste Land* clearly illustrates my point.

The Waste Land manuscript has, for the first time, opened the poem's different strata in the process of its composition, to critical inspection and hence to a re-examination of the poem's ambiguities—both local and structural—as well as its overall significance. From the very beginning, the poem's 'message', if there was any, had been in question. Nonetheless, the critics certainly did not read the poem as a "a piece of rhythmical grumbling"⁸. It was inevitably seen as a poem of crisis: D.S. Mirsky, for example, read it as a poem of the apocalypse of the bourgeoisie.⁷ For him, it mirrored that

moment when philosophy paints grey upon grey and the owl of Minerva is already on her wings. Stephen Spender much later would recall that his generation felt *The Waste Land* was a Buddhist poem.⁸ But quite apart from its topical or thematic significance, questions were raised about its form: did it have a closed form with no progression as F.R. Leavis suggested,⁹ or did it point towards a resolution beyond its ostensible limits? All such questions and many related ones can now be re-examined from the data made available by the manuscript, which has suddenly released the poem's buried alter-egos like so many protoplasmic ghosts. Already critics have begun to give new readings of the poem on the basis of its recently discovered subliminal possibilities. Thus in Hugh Kenner's reading¹⁰ the Aeneas myth, barely perceptible in the poem's final version, has been given a great deal of importance at the cost of the once obligatory Grail legend. Others have argued for completely new ways of reading the poem, setting aside exegetical approaches. Professor Litz, for one, draws attention to the poem's interesting use of various formal devices, its links to both the less portentous aspects of literary tradition and the contemporary scene, including the avant-garde movement in the arts.¹¹

Many of these suggestions are obviously valuable, but the question of the poem's overall significance seems to me bypassed by some of these recent critics. While the Grail legend, which belongs to the poem's mechanics of structure rather than its organic development, may be safely discarded as a vantage point from which to explain its meaning, the problem of the poem's coherence remains, even if one asserts that it has no 'plot' or that it should be seen in a 'spatial' rather than 'temporal' sense.¹² This is where despite surfaces, an understanding of Eliot's use of Dante's poetry with its eschatological intensity becomes useful.

I have argued elsewhere that Eliot used allusions to Dante's *Commedia* as a way of resolving the problem of presenting a moral point of view which his Symbolist techniques and the deployment of the 'closed form' of the dramatic monologue tended to preclude.¹³ But aside from Eliot's evocation of the Dantesque moral *schema* by allusion and implication, Dante's example appealed to Eliot's "Boston Alexandrianism", as Van Wyck Brooks put it, because it reinforced his natural bent for synthesis and his syncretic approach to writing. When Graham Martin criticizes Northrop Frye¹⁴ for in-

viting a comparison between Dante and Eliot, he forgets this fact of Eliot's cultural heritage. He also fails to see that Eliot's use of the model of Dante is an act of *imitatio*, so central to both literary and religious history. It is the paradigm which is important and one's attempt to live by it, not the success or failure. Again, Eliot as a poet of "urban apocalypse",¹⁵ to use Kenner's phrase, was inevitably influenced by Dante's treatment of the symbol of the city in both its mundane concreteness and in the Augustinian eschatological sense. When Pound excised the pastiches of Pope from the early draft of *The Waste Land*, he more than strengthened the poem's formal structure, he intensified its apocalyptic intensity at the cost of its roooooo decor.

Eliot's interest in philosophical poetry first emerges in his "Dante" (1919) essay. It was also a time when he had begun to write what was to become *The Waste Land*.¹⁶ In this essay, Eliot criticized Valéry's view that, due to altered circumstances, philosophical poetry was no longer feasible. Eliot attacked Valéry on two fronts. He argued, in the first place, that if Valéry found any 'ancient' philosophical poetry still valuable, then the reason why modern philosophical poems fail cannot lie in the mere chronology of the poems concerned. Secondly, he went on to say, if Valéry held that poetry and philosophy are separable in any poem, then their interdependence can be shown: his example was Dante's poetry. Eliot pointed out that in Dante's poetry "the philosophy is essential to the structure and that the structure is essential to the poetic beauty of the parts" and that here "philosophy is employed in a different form from that which it takes in admittedly unsuccessful poems."¹⁷ Eliot suggested that Valéry's error derived from his view that the modern poet "endeavors to produce in us a state".¹⁸

As seems obvious from Eliot's disagreement with Valéry, Eliot recognized the intimate relationship between philosophy (in a non-syntomatic sense) and poetry in the *Commedia*. He also assumed the significance of this example for the modern poet. Again, Eliot's criticism of Valéry's "l'état d'âme"¹⁹ as an aim of modern poetry points to his interest in philosophy as a principle of impersonal order in poetry: it implies a double negation of subjectivism in art—both in the act of creation and communication.

Eliot's comments on Dante in this essay, as Sister Mary Cleophas and John J. Bullaro, among others, have recognized, are extremely

important for understanding his own method in *The Waste Land*. But, because of his alternately rather loose and strictly technical use of certain key words like 'emotion' and 'feeling', his understanding of Dante has been questioned. Professor Bullaro, following Gian Orsini, is of those who recognize the impact of Dante's poetry on Eliot's, but are sceptical about the qualitative aspect of such an influence. Professor Bullaro's remarks offer a certain insight into the kind of confusion which some critics have fallen into, in part due to Eliot's own fuzziness and in part due to the nebulousness surrounding certain terms like 'Symbolism', 'Imagism' etc.

Professor Bullaro correctly sees that Eliot's affinity for the Symbolists posed a dilemma about writing poetry without abandoning discursive and philosophic patterns; but he fails to note that if Eliot were a Symbolist poet in the technical and historical sense, the very term Symbolist would preclude didactic and discursive writing.²⁰ More seriously, he mistakenly thinks that Eliot approves of Valéry's theory of "l'état d'âme". In fact, Eliot quotes the example of Dante for the opposite purpose: "Dante helps us to provide a criticism of M. Valéry's 'modern poet' who attempts 'to produce in us a state'."²¹ Eliot even questions the poet-mystic equation implied by the Symbolist idea of the *voyant*, by pointing out the objective nature of the mystical experience. The Symbolists had postulated a mystical world of transcendence through the symbol itself—a noumenal world of the unknowable. Eliot's 'mysticism', on the other hand, is rooted within the parameters of orthodoxy, as if to avoid the Symbolist 'mirage'. No doubt, in Eliot's poetry, the Symbolist 'mirage' often exists side by side with the fragments of Dantesque visions, as in "Ash Wednesday" or the *Four Quartets*, and occasionally even becomes interchangeable with them. But that is a question of fact, not of choice, on Eliot's part. By overt and declared intentions, Eliot's poetry is anti-Symbolist, as Pound's variety of Imagism had been, because it is committed to dealing with the *données* of experience in the most comprehensive sense, as Eliot's introduction to Valéry's *Art of Poetry* clearly demonstrates.

There is, however, a great deal of legitimacy in considering Eliot's approach to Dante as 'subjective'. The passage from Eliot's "Dante" (1919) which has given rise to a great deal of confusion reads as follows :

If the artistic emotion presented by any episode of the Comedy is dependent upon the whole, we may proceed to inquire what the whole scheme is. The usefulness of allegory and astronomy is obvious. A mechanical framework, in a poem of so vast an ambit, was a necessity. As the centre of gravity of emotions is more remote from a single human action, or a system of purely human action, than in drama or epic, so the framework has to be more artificial and apparently more mechanical. It is not essential that the allegory or the almost unintelligible astronomy should be understood—only that its presence should be justified. The emotional structure within the scaffold is what must be understood—the structure is an ordered scale of human emotions.²²

It has been suggested that Eliot in this passage innocently dismisses allegory as well as confuses between 'allegory' and the 'framework' of the *Commedia* which is the tripartite vision of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. But what seems a contradiction on Eliot's part—that the allegory did not have to be 'understood' but only 'justified'—is easily resolved if one asks 'understood by whom?'. What Eliot had in mind when writing this popular essay (his later Dante essay also formed part of a popular series) was to persuade the ordinary reader that it was worthwhile to read Dante even without any scholarly apparatus. Dante's own insistence on the *Commedia*'s literal level (he had to remind the reader of the poem's allegory, as in the Medusa episode) substantiates at least partially what Eliot was suggesting. This apparent anti-allegorical bias does not necessarily stem from his ignorance or the limitations of Dante scholarship in America. Giuseppe Borgese quite rightly pointed out that distaste for allegory had also been common in Italy.²³ Cesare Balbo²⁴ and even Francesco De Sanctis²⁵ had resisted the allegory. Eliot's comments in "Dante" (1919) are, in fact, remarkably close to Croce's in *Poesia di Dante* (1921).

Similarly, there are misunderstandings about what Eliot means by terms such as structure, framework or form. When a critic like Gian Orsini describes the framework of the *Commedia*, he deals with the poem from the outside in terms of its discernible parts. When Eliot says that allegory is part of the poem's framework or that it is mechanical, he is describing the poem as if he were writing it. His perspective on the poem first focuses on the poem's immediate level and then on all that defines, amplifies or supports it. Allegory from this vantage point is a principle of organization, an artifice

deliberately chosen for amplification of both semantic and symbolic strands in the *Commedia*. It is different from the structure as it is *immediately* given in our experience of the poem, because it is at one remove, just as it was for Dante the pilgrim in the early stages of the journey. In other words, it defines the conceptual relations between the levels of experience rather than the existential and serial relationships between emotions and moments or dramatic contexts. Hence even philosophy, to the extent it is part of the poet's life, is more an immediate *datum* of experience than allegory, which comments upon it: "Sometimes the philosophy is confused with the allegory. The philosophy is an ingredient, it is a part of Dante's world, just as it is a part of life; the allegory is the scaffold on which the poem is built", wrote Eliot.²⁶

Just the same, one cannot help wondering what Eliot means by the structure of emotions in the *Commedia*. At first sight it suggests something like Valéry's "l'état d'âme".²⁷ On a closer inspection however, it becomes clear that Eliot's use of terms such as 'emotion' and 'feeling' is less Symbolist than Bradleyan, and when he applies them to the *Commedia* he has certain properties of Dante's poem in mind. Interestingly, Eliot's first critical discussion of Dante takes place in the context of his attempt to define the relation between experience and literature, which evolves around the key words 'feeling' and 'emotion'. In "Tradition and the individual Talent" (1917) Eliot wrote about poetry:

It may be formed out of emotion or may be a combination of several: the various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases and images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feeling solely. Canto XV of the *Inferno* (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation: but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of details. The last quatrain gives us an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which "came", which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to.²⁸

As the quotation cited above indicates, 'feeling' refers to something more localized than 'emotion'. Emotions, whether complex or simple, embryonically embody structural properties and are related to 'situations' in poetry. Emotion, in other words, is closer

to the logic of structure, whereas feeling, which though localized is not necessarily random or fragmentary, seems akin to 'intuition'. Eliot's analysis of these terms in *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley* is a key to these definitions. He pointed out that in the first place 'feeling', as the term is employed by Bradley, is not to be interpreted in the psychological sense,⁸⁹ that feeling in a metaphysical sense can either be an 'object' of a consciousness with relations to other objects, or something "wider than consciousness".⁹⁰ And it is 'feeling' in the narrower sense with characteristics of objectivity that forms part of the structural relations a poem necessitates. Of course, if 'feeling' in this definition is objective, the term 'objective' itself undergoes modifications by dialectical tension between object and feeling. For Eliot this dialectic entails "the continuous transition by which feeling becomes object and object becomes feeling"⁹¹. The "yellow fog" passage in "Prufrock" illustrates this on a simple level ; more complexly, it describes the relation between Tiresias' consciousness and what he perceives on the one hand, and on the other, the total design of *The Waste Land*, which objectifies that consciousness.

'Emotion', by contrast, is already structured for Eliot. He illustrates its relationship to feeling by a quotation from Bradley : "In any emotion one part of that emotion consists already of objects, of perceptions and ideas before my mind. And the whole emotion being one, the special group of feeling is united with these objects before my mind, united with them integrally and directly though not objectively."⁹² The close affinity between Bradley's words and Eliot's comments on the Brunetto Latini episode is obvious. These definitions moreover underlie Eliot's view of the 'objectivity' of Dante's poetry. While Eliot often confuses between the everyday meaning of these terms and their more rigorous philosophical meaning, it seems clear that he does not have any "l'état d'âme" in mind. When Eliot writes about the scale of emotions in Dante, particularly in his "Dante" (1929), what he suggests is the pattern of *figura* as an organizing principle, more or less in the sense Erich Auerbach has used it in his famous essay. In effect, his own major poetry, *The Waste Land* for an example, often seems structured according to his perception of the figural pattern in Dante's *Commedia*.

In *The Waste Land*, "the structure of emotions" is embodied

in the scale of imagery by which the poem moves between the suggestions of an ideal order and its distortions in reality. The 'philosophy' is implied in the overview and its raw ingredients are concretely given in the images of life. The woman in the canoe in the third movement is not merely a parody of Dante's La Pia, she is linked to her archetype by the theme of violence and outraged innocence. The image of Elizabeth and Leicester on the Thames also indirectly evokes the same theme by way of Walter Scott's *Kennilworth* (where Leicester murders his wife). On an overt level, these images suggest a sense of *decrecendo* towards a deglamorized banal world, but underlying all of them there is the pattern of repetition, of spiritual sterility and futile lust. In this respect, Eliot's handling of this sequence of images is not so very different from Dante's in the *Inferno*. Eliot too, like Dante, constantly exploits the tension between the paradigmatic dimension of the poem and its syntagmatic aspect, that is to say, its order of presentation and apperception and its implied order of values. But by contrast to Dante's method in the *Commedia*, where the sequential and 'temporal' experiences of the pilgrim Dante are gradually spatialized into eternal modes and values, Eliot's poem remains a poem of 'time', where the transitional and provisional elements of experience are not given a final form. But here too, "Le cose tutte quante / hanno ordine tra loro" (*Paradiso*, I, 103-04).

"Gerontion", which Eliot had wanted to use as a prologue to *The Waste Land*—an idea that Pound vetoed—gives us an insight into Eliot's preoccupation with man in the process of transition between two worlds. It is a perennial theme which recurs again and again from his earliest poetry to the last of the *Four Quartets*; sometimes it is given in the images of the stair, sometimes in his voyage imagery and sometimes in the underground train in the London tube, to take a few examples. It presents a view of man in "mezzo del cammin" and accounts for the provisional quality of Eliot's paradisaic 'visions' and not merely because they are fragmentarily presented. While these Dantesque visions are 'real', the pilgrim-voyager always wakes from them into time. Only in "Little Gidding" the vision of the Rose retains a sense of finality because the poem *ends* on that note on the printed page. In *The Waste Land*, as Harry Levin has put it, "the dream vision of Tiresias takes the course of a Dantesque pilgrimage, which stops at wayside

stations for interviews with the *dramatis personae*."⁸³ The important point to note is the poem's forward thrust beyond the present into the future which is paradoxically in tension with Tiresias' lack of *disio* and sense of hopelessness. Yet Tiresias' role is crucial in understanding the relation between Eliot's 'anti-epic' and Dante's poem.

In "Gerontion", everyman hid behind the mask of the protagonist—the little old man. The poem had employed specific settings before breaking out into a meditation unconditioned by any spatio-temporal co-ordinates except the protagonist's age. Tiresias in *The Waste Land* is freed of all restrictions imposed by time or space or sex. His is an unlocalized *persona* contemplating the nature of process, of time, as manifested in given situations and settings. Like Virgil he guides us, not through space, but time, as we read its reflexions in his consciousness. Philip R. Headings points out⁸⁴ that Tiresias like Virgil, leaves us at the top of Mount Purgatory. The reason is similar: Tiresias guides us by encompassing within his synthetic consciousness the images of life, uniting and interpreting them by his sense of pattern. "What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem", wrote Eliot in his "Notes" to *The Waste Land*. But, if his perspective shapes all other perspectives, it is not his to give us the *meaning* of the substance. Even as a 'personage', he remains a part of the poem and is subject to the poem's organizing perspective. Tiresias' self-identification (in l. 246), "I who have sat by Thebes below the wall / And walked among the lowest of the dead", hints at the limitations of his point of view. In Sophocles' play, Tiresias as the seer knew the *facts* of Oedipus' life while the king did not. In the scene of encounter between the two, Tiresias at first, out of a sense of pity, refused to tell Oedipus the true story of his life and then did so eventually only when angered, believing all the while that truth would destroy Oedipus. Thus he showed his limited idea of truth, of the purpose and power of knowledge. He saw truth as merely antithetical to illusion and to the extent happiness depends on illusion, to happiness. *Oedipus at Colonus*, of course, repudiates Tiresias' view of truth and grants Oedipus a dark triumph.

Similarly, Tiresias' interpretation of the meaning of events in *The Waste Land* is a limited one. Tiresias resolves events into patterns and interprets their significance on this secondary level of interrelatedness. In reducing the uniqueness of the characters

or situations to a pattern of analogues, his is a destructive consciousness, because reality becomes illusory in this process: "And I Tiresias have foresuffered all...". In this purely paradigmatic sense of life, each event is fated and illustrates an idea of the event. The Dantean allusions help set up the norms by which to judge the patterns imposed by Tiresias and to counter Tiresias' reduction of the linear progression of life into cycles of repetition. Tiresias, the non-Christian, remains limited to and by the cycle of Nature, with its symbol in the Buddhistic Wheel of Suffering qualified by infernal implications from Dante's *Inferno*. The poem, if viewed exclusively through Tiresias' eyes, indeed has no progression, as Leavis had thought. But the allusion to Dante's *Purgatory* points to the stage beyond the Wheel of Suffering and indicates the redemption of the Wheel, as in Dante's poem. Superficially, Tiresias seems to deny any exit from *The Waste Land*, by placing his allusion to Dante's *Purgatorio*, "Poi s'ascose nel fuoco che gli affina", on the same level as the other fragments. But one takes note of the subjective quality of the first person singular in "These fragments I have shored against my ruin" and the limitation of the point of view it suggests. Also, the closing benediction in Sanskrit reverts to the religious theme implied by the allusion to Dante. In effect, these two quotations frame the other 'fragments'. While Tiresias' secular consciousness treats them as fragments of literary imagination, as fiction, no matter how precious, they point to a continuity of the journey into a realm that he cannot envision, but makes indirectly accessible through what he presents without full understanding.

Tiresias' anguish, unredeemed by an *amor fati*, at watching cycles repeat endlessly, seems fraught with a desire for the end of time. Paralleling the Cumaean Sybil's death-wish in the epigraph, it appears in images of ruin, destruction and doom. At the same time, Tiresias' is a secular apocalypse plangent with a sense of catastrophic ending rather than revelation, in its traditional religious meaning. The City, *urbs mundana* now separated from *urbs aeterna* through loss of faith, becomes the primary vehicle for his dark musings. It centres upon a dying nature and not the garden of Dante's *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*. London is the specific locale used in the poem, but it stands for all the "unreal" metropolises of the past and present. As Spender saw it, Eliot here

explores the truth that the modern city "bound entirely to the temporal and gambling at every moment with destruction and the eternal city with aims of civilization outside the temporal"³⁶ are no longer reconcilable. This sense of dissociation, of imperfect correspondence between the realms of Nature and Spirit underlies the phantasmagoric unreality of *The Waste Land* and gives an infernal nuance to what might have been ordinary events in the poem. But the anxious foreboding in the images indirectly points to a dimension of significance which remains beyond the speaker Tiresias' grasp, while he nonetheless feels it to be there.

From the outset *The Waste Land* was seen in relation to the *Inferno*. It is a comparison which the poem's allusions to and adaptations from Dante certainly seem to invite. And the recently published manuscript of the poem clearly verifies Eliot's deliberate use of the parallelism with Dante's quest theme. But it also shows how a series of excisions led to a shift of emphasis towards the Dantesque element and the apocalyptic theme. In fact, the poem in its definitive form has a deeper affinity with Dante's poem than it had at the beginning, despite the cancellation of a long passage based on Ulysses' voyage in *Inferno* XXVI. The reason seems to be that now the poem as a whole has both a greater unity of structure and tone than before, much of it owing to the Dantean overview. In the earliest draft, to give an example, Eliot used Boston as the locale for the opening section, and in greater detail than in the case of London in the final version. But despite the deployment of urban imagery—the music-hall, vaudeville show, the brothel, etc—the scene had none of the nightmarish intensity of the more synoptic city-scape which survives in the London bridge passage in the present poem. While originally the *tranches de vie* were a take-off point, offering a contrast to the religious or 'romantic' themes, they were also separable from the symbolic scheme of the poem. In fact, the poem only gradually assumed a focus. The pastiches of Pope or Dante in the fourth movement, the photographic realism of other moments, failed to cohere in the manuscript, not only because they offered a bewildering *mélange de genres*, which remains true of the poem as it stands now, but because of the absence of a controlling perspective and a scheme. Pound's excisions invariably show this up. Pound concentrated on essential symbolic details at the cost of their

narrative or logical extensions and threw both the Grail and the Dantean analogues into relief: the first as the poem's central analogue, explicating the rhythm of nature and history in terms of the quest theme, and the second as the level where historical experience may be resolved into spiritual meaning.

Some critics, however, deny that Dante exerted any major influence on *The Waste Land*. Professor Bullaro, for example, writes that "*The Waste Land*, for all its quotes and paraphrases from Dante and even in its reflection of Dante's Anti-Inferno, the abode of the indecisive 'trimmers', is the least Dantean of Eliot's major poems. Although it gives a picture of a modern inferno and incorporates history, its form and method is very different from that in his later major poems."⁹⁶ Anna Balakian in *The Symbolist Movement*, to cite another critic, thinks the later poems 'metaphysical', not Dantesque, and finds that *The Waste Land* is Symbolist. Professor Donald Davie, by contrast, insists that *Four Quartets* as well as *The Waste Land* are Symbolist. As I have tried to point out, some of these assessments involve divergent definitions of the same terms, as well as the tendency to apply categories of literary history too rigidly to individual works. But it is also worth noting that in his Norton Lectures, Eliot developed his theory of three "metaphysical ages" and included Dante as well as Laforgue with Donne and Herbert in the purview of the term 'metaphysical'. Apart from the qualities he found these poets to share, what his sweeping thesis involves is the perception of their influences on his poetry, as they converged into a new synthesis.

The Waste Land, which is stylistically as well as thematically the *summa* of Eliot's early poetry, is closer to the 'Symbolists' than let us say, "Ash Wednesday", where the symbols, even when completely 'open', are constantly subject to an overtly theological scheme and infused with traditional religious significance. Here, apart from questions of technique, such as structural ellipsis, ellision, synaesthesia, etc, the poem, in fact, seems Baudelairean by its very feeling of the city-scape, even when the actual images may be taken from Dante. Eliot himself has underlined his debt to Baudelaire (who for his part, acknowledged his debt to Dante): "I think 'that from Baudelaire I learned first, a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in

my own language, of the more sordid aspects of the modern metropolis, of the possibility of fusion between the sordidly realistic and phantasmagoric, the possibility of the juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact and the fantastic."⁸⁷ It may be appropriate to add that Eliot also saw Baudelaire's poetry as a fragmentary *Inferno*, a point he made in his "Baudelaire" essay. *The Waste Land*, in fact, is the poem where Baudelaire's influence is at its strongest, replacing that of Laforgue in his early poems, but if it controls local symbolism and the sense of texture, it remains subservient to the Dantean perspective.⁸⁸

The Dantean influence on *The Waste Land* is deeper than it seems on the surface. To take an example of the interaction of the Dantesque element with the Baudelairean, the first allusions to Dante's poetry, in the "Unreal city" passage are given in a context which is overtly Baudelairean, although resonating to Shelley's description of the encounter with Rousseau in "The Triumph of Life". The encounter with Stetson (the identity of the man deriving from the brandname of a hat) is more in the nature of Baudelaire's vision-fantasy in "Les Sept vieillards" than the intense theological realism of Dante's visions in the *Inferno*. It describes an ordinary encounter in everyday life, *à la* Baudelaire, distorted by the pervasive unreality in the atmosphere. The dialogue between the characters, disjointed and ragged, has the quality of experiences in a nightmare where obscurity is fraught with foreboding and the lack of logic or syntax spans worlds of private significance. In any event, Eliot's lines, for their effect, depend on our participating in the sense of unreality they create, rather than their exact sense, as Dante's do in the *Commedia*. The Baudelairean technique of projecting vision-fantasies is also apparent in the way Eliot relates the last two parts of this section. "I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring" is a link line. The people, first seen in the cards, in the "fragmented vision" and "low dream", become real in the next passage. The cards are a point of departure, *à la* Baudelaire, in the object-world. But the image is also unobtrusively Dantesque. Not only does it refer generally to images of circular movement which recur often in the *Inferno*, but specifically to just such an image immediately before Dante meets Celestino V, an episode to which Eliot refers here: "In quell'aura senza tempo tinta, / come la rosa quando turba

spira" (*Inferno* III, 29-30). In its turn, this image of circular motion relates to other circular movements in the poem, all symbolized by the Wheel, to which I have referred earlier. Thus the lines "Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you", in the opening section, gives us the eastward movement of the Quest, whereas "Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, London", in the last movement, gives us the reversal of direction in both time and space. Such images of circularity are everywhere; the leitmotifs in the poem are themselves like repeating points in the poem's qualitative progression. The Dantean analogue gives us an insight into both the nature of suffering on this wheel of fire, as well as the possibility of salvation on the spiral of ascent.

The cancelled "Ulysses" passage in the manuscript is another instance of Eliot's syncretic method. The passage concerned had little to do with Baudelaire, but a lot more with Melville and Dante. Later, in "Ash Wednesday" and the *Four Quartets*, the voyage theme would emerge as a major *topos*, but more in the line of Baudelaire's *poésie des départs*, as noted by Wallace Fowle.⁹⁰ Still, in the light of Dante's use of the Ulysses theme in relation to his own quest, indeed his appropriation of it as a metaphor in order to become an Ulysses of the Spirit, Eliot's own use of the voyage theme assumes a different meaning, following as it does the pattern set by Dante. It cannot be overemphasized that Eliot's poetry never alludes to Dante casually, but the allusions are an integral part of its structure.

In *The Waste Land*, the structural logic behind the allusions becomes clear when one notes that none of the adaptations or quotations alludes to *Paradiso*. Secondly, the allusions are placed in the first, third and fifth movements of the poem which, given its five act or movement structure, analogously to that of a symphony or drama, emphasize their relation to the three crucial moments of exposition, crisis or peripeteia and conclusion. It seems that even the incidences of the allusions are symmetrical: there are two in the first movement; one in the third; and two in the final movement of the poem. Only one of the allusions involves a direct quotation from Dante, that in the Daniel passage from *Purgatorio* XXVI, and it comes at the very end of the poem where its original language makes explicit the ideal towards which the poem

points. Except for the adaptation of the La Pia lines ("Highbury bore me / Richmond and Kew undid me") in the third movement, all the other allusions follow their original sequence in the *Commedia*. The allusions to Dante in the first movement refer to the Ante-Inferno (Cantos III and IV); allusions in the final movement evoke the Ugolino episode and Dante's meeting with Arnaut; the one at the very end of *Inferno*, and the other marking off Purgatory proper from the *paradiso terrestre*. The La Pia episode, in fact, fits into this scheme in so far as it occurs at the very beginning of the purgatorial ascent from Ante-Purgatory. Clearly, all these allusions refer to points of transition in Dante's quest and present us with Dante's journey up to the end of Purgatory proper in an elliptical or telescoped form. The structure of the *Commedia*, before the emergence of 'higher visions', is thus given to us in ellipsis in Eliot's miniature 'anti-epic'.

The allusions to the Trimmers and the Virtuous Pagans in the Limbo, in the opening movement of *The Waste Land*, serve to establish a perspective on the inhabitants of Eliot's modern *inferno*. Eliot deliberately chose them with a view to conveying the absence of faith and commitment in the modern world, with the accompanying loss of passion. In the first draft of "A Game of Chess", for example, the wind imagery was rooted in the Paolo and Francesca episode ("Carrying / Away the (little) light dead people") to parallel and contrast with the relationship between the man and the woman in this movement. But it was excised from the final version, to keep the lines of the poem's "structure of emotions" as clear as possible. Obviously, there is a deepening sense of isolation in the poem, which reaches a culmination in the reference to Ugolino's tower. Then it gains a spiritual resonance in the hope of redemption through purgatorial suffering, as the self acknowledges the Other in the poem's final stage, in Arnaut's confession. The adaptation of La Pia's words, on the other hand, seems to require an explanation. It occurs in the third movement, which is the poem's turning point and a kind of nadir. It follows the two part hell of spiritual isolation and aberration of the natural, as given in the diptych of the second movement, where the first half, with its tinsel glow of a decadent and sterile world burdened with meaningless *fin-de-siècle bric-à-brac* had collapsed before the crude, ruthless vulgarity of life in the second. Thus the allusion to La Pia comes at

a point when the poem hesitates between alternate possibilities, images of hell and images of salvation, and it is ambiguous as a result. From the heart of Eliot's hell, it evokes the possibility of a world beyond. In La Pia's gentle words, Dante had given us a fragmentary glimpse of her personal tragedy, almost overcome but not quite forgotten by her. Eliot considers the solution in an inverted image in the mirror of the present—in the girl in the canoe. Given the context, parody becomes the appropriate form: what he parodies, at the same time, offers a glimmer of a future, concurrently with the paradigm from Dante, but only as a premonition. In the meantime, the journey still has to continue through the Inferno to Ugolino's tower.

Aside from such direct allusions to Dante's poem, *The Waste Land* shows other affinities with the *Commedia*. It employs parataxis as a means of exposition, which Eliot had noted as a characteristic of Dante's method, as opposed to Shakespeare's analytical approach to his material. Because of the absence of narrative line, *The Waste Land* carries the paratactic method of 'revelation' to an extreme. It turns into a major device for creating a sense of simultaneity which, as in a vision, relates the timeless to the moment. *The Waste Land*, like the *Commedia*, is also cast in the mode of memory. While there is no "libro della memoria" in this poem, Tiresias' memories cast their fixed shadows on the perceived reality. Excluding the possibility of anything new, his is a memory controlling the shape of events. The very opening lines of *The Waste Land*, where Marie's regressive memories rise from Tiresias' prologue and then merge into it, as he questions the roots of the present in the landscape of the prophets, establishes the mode. Like Dante's sinners, the inhabitants of Eliot's hell are enclosed in their memories and memories of desire, re-enacting their past as a futile ritual in the present. The paratactic method allows Eliot to reveal the latent rhythms of this process by an implied logic of associations.

Finally, Eliot's interest in Dante's allegorical method, already felt in his handling of symbols in "Gerontion", finds a more elaborate articulation in *The Waste Land*. Eliot, as I pointed out earlier, had a special view of the Dantean allegory: with him, allegory is, in the first place, a structural device to suggest the symbolic coherence of the poem and to develop its symbolic resonances by expanding the implications of the symbols. Unlike in Dante's

poem the allegory here does not entail a separation of the levels of meaning, which constantly merge into one another. Nor is there the elaboration of a single "dark metaphor" to quote Spenser, since the narrative line is absent. The Grail myth, given in fragments and allusions, serves as a structural anchorage for the poem, but with the traditional relation between the literal level with its 'plot', and the moral on anagogical levels inverted. It is the 'framework' of the poem, in the sense Eliot had characterized Dante's use of allegory or astronomy,⁴⁰ which does not require a detailed understanding. But its presence is a perennial reminder of the need for a 'double vision' in reading the poem.

The allegorical method is again a major assimilative device in the poem, as in the Middle Ages, when allegory often allowed the absorption and reinterpretation of heterogeneous, non-Christian cultures and their values. *The Golden Bough* of Fraser or Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* are not mere sources for the poem, but in themselves symbolic of the whole thrust of secularization in our time. Allegory becomes a way of overcoming such obstacles to faith: Eliot does not merely point out that Christ has his archetype in Osiris (the Hanged God) legend, but affirms the need to believe despite the scepticism such an awareness involves. The allegory in this sense bridges the gap between nature and spirit which, Eliot's master Babbitt said, had opened up during the Renaissance. The allusions to Dante create the poem's 'anagogical' and eschatological dimension and frame, with the Grail myth, the brooding soul of Tiresias.

As is evident, Eliot's interpretation of Dante's poetry, while seemingly subjective, is never casual and always acts as a shaping influence on his own poetry. "Ash Wednesday", for example, has given a new life to allegory in our time, as do the *Four Quartets*. Eliot's critical essays on Dante, often dictated by his own creative needs and achievements, are not criticism in the ordinary sense. Yet, not only have they served to revivify interest in Dante's poetry on an unprecedented scale, they have made aspects of Dante's work meaningful to the modern reader. Dante served Eliot as a *speculum seculorum*. It is only within the ambit of Dante's example that the various forces in Eliot's make-up—Idealism and Modernism, Anglo-Catholicism and the literary influences of the English Metaphysicals and the Symbolist movement, of Pound and the Roman-

tics—seem reconciled, as the poet forges a pattern analogous to that in Dante's poem, stretching from *The Waste Land* to the *Quartets*. The fragments of the past and the present are thus made to cohere into a new design of the higher dream.

NOTES

- 1 "He is suffering the fate that overtakes every famous writer on death: a reaction that has in it a good deal of malice, like the malice of school boys when the master has just left the room." "T.S. Eliot", *T.S. Eliot: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. Linda W. Wagner (New York, 1974), pp. 125-26.
- 2 *T.S. Eliot in Perspective, A Symposium*, ed. G. Martin (New York, 1970), p. 13.
- 3 Recent biographical works such as *Great Tom* or Robert Senoncourt's *T.S. Eliot: A Memoir*, are unsatisfactory both as biographies and criticism. The best reminiscences of Eliot—one thinks of Conrad Aiken, Wyndham Lewis, Herbert Read—do not attempt to deal directly with Eliot's *oeuvre* but help to place it in time and give us an insight into Eliot's personality and preoccupations. While psychological criticism of Eliot's works is meagre, Michael Goldman in his interesting essay "Fear in the Way: the Design of Eliot's Drama" in *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of 'The Waste Land'*, ed. Walton Litz (Princeton, 1973), has pointed the way. M.C. Bradbrook, *T.S. Eliot: The Making of 'The Waste Land'* (London, 1972), also touches on the relation between Eliot's psychology and poetry. It should be noted that while extremely reserved and private, Eliot in "Dante" (1929), in the context of his discussion of childhood love in *Vita Nuova*, acknowledged I.A. Richards' perception of the importance of the sexual theme in *The Waste Land*. As regards pure biographical criticism, Herbert Howarth's *Notes on Some Figures behind T.S. Eliot* (Boston, 1964), still remains a very pertinent work. Valerie Eliot, in her introduction to *The Waste Land* manuscript has added some invaluable insights which one hopes she would some day enlarge upon.
- 4 Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot* (New York, 1959), Steffan Bergsten, *Time and Eternity: A Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets'* (Lund, 1960) and more recently, Kristian Smidt (*Poetry and Belief in the Work of T.S. Eliot*, London, 1967) have dealt with Eliot's work in relation to modern philosophy. Richard Wollheim's essay "Eliot and F.H. Bradley" in *T.S. Eliot in Perspective*, is a welcome contribution in this area. Allen Austin, *T.S. Eliot, The Literary and Social Criticism* (Bloomington, 1971), Roger Kojecky, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (New York, 1972) and Rajendra Varma, *Royalist in Politics: T.S. Eliot and the Political Philosophy* (London, 1968), among others, investigate the social and political aspects of Eliot's work.

5 "The Poetry of Learning", *T.S. Eliot in Perspective*, pp. 31-44. Professor Bateson's comments on Eliot as an "illusionist of literary scholarship" would seem more appropriate if he had some idea of Eliot's methods and aims. Astoundingly, he lumps Eliot's allusions to other authors, pastiches, neologisms, etc, all under the simple-minded category of "plagiarism".

6 "Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of criticism of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling." *T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land, A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, edited with an Introduction by Valerie Eliot (New York, 1971), p. xxxii.

7 "T.S. Eliot et la fin de la poésie bourgeoise", *Echanges*, no. 5 (December 1931).

8 "Remembering Eliot", *T.S. Eliot : The Man and His Work*, ed. Allen Tate (New York, 1966), p. 40.

9 "The unity the poem aims at is that of an inclusive consciousness : the organization it achieves as a work of art is of the kind that has been illustrated, an organization that may, by analogy be called musical. It exhibits no progression." *New Bearings in English Poetry : A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (first published, London, 1932 ; Ann Arbor Paperback, second printing, 1964), p. 103.

10 "The Urban Apocalypse", *Eliot in His Time*, op. cit.

11 "*The Waste Land* : Fifty Years After", *Eliot in His Time*, p. 9.

12 Ibid., p. 7.

13 See Ron D.K. Banerjee, "The Dantean Overview : The Epigraph to 'Pruferck' ", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 87. no. 7 (December 1972).

14 See "Introduction" to *Eliot in Perspective*, p. 19. Van Wyck Brooks, *New England : Indian Summer (1865-1913)* (London, 1940), p. 516, touches on Eliot's Boston background.

15 See Hugh Kenner, "The Urban Apocalypse"; also, Frank Kermode, "Babylonish Dialect", *T.S. Eliot : The Man and His Work*. Kermode quite rightly points out that London in Eliot's *The Waste Land* is an imperial city : "The imperialist Eliot is the poet of the *urbs aeterna*, of the transmitted but corrupted dignity of Rome. Hence his veneration not only for Baudelaire (where his Symbolist predecessors would have agreed) but for Virgil (where they would not). The other side of this city is the Babylon of *Apocalypse*, and when the imperium is threadbare and the end approaches of that which Virgil called endless, this is the city we see. It is the *Blick ins Chaos*." (p. 237) Although Kermode omits Dante, Eliot obviously owed a great deal to Dante's symbolic treatment of the *topos* of the city which from the *Apocalypse* on, had been intimately connected with eschatological vision literature but received its most detailed exposition in Dante's *Commedia*. See Friedrich Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, Vol. I, translated by Jonathan Steinberg (Garden City, 1968), for a brilliant and sweeping treatment of the apocalyptic aspect of the Western intellectual tradition. As regards the relation between the *urbs* and apocalyptic symbolism, the following quotation from Heer gives us an insight : "... the return of the Christ-emperor in

the *Apocalypse* was set in the sacral-political framework of a cosmic circus performance, because the assumption of the throne by a late Roman emperor usually began with a circus. The horses of the four riders of the *Apocalypse* wore the colours of four teams of the circus." (p. 2)

16 See Hugh Kenner, "The Urban Apocalypse", for a discussion of the different dates involved in the composition of *The Waste Land*.

17 *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1928), p. 160.

18 Ibid.

19 The passage from Valéry which Eliot used as a foil for his "Dante" (1919) essay, reads as follows: "La philosophie et même la morale tendirent à fuir les oeuvres pour se placer dans les réflexions qui les précèdent ... Parler aujourd'hui de poésie philosophique (fut-ce en invoquant Alfred de Vigny, Leconte de Lisle et quelques autres), c'est naïvement confondre des conditions et des applications de l'esprit incompatibles entr'elles. N'est-ce pas oublier que le but de celui qui spéculé est de fixer ou de créer une notion—c'est-à-dire un *pouvoir* et un *instrument de pouvoir*, cependant que le poète moderne essaie de produire en nous un état et de porter cet état exceptionnel au point d'une jouissance parfaite." (Quoted by Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*, p. 159).

20 "The Dante of T.S. Eliot", *Dante Profile 1265-1965*, ed. Franca Schettino (Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 31-32.

21 *The Sacred Wood*, p. 170.

22 Ibid., pp. 167-68.

23 *On Dante Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936).

24 Cesare Balbo, *Vita di Dante* (Firenze, 1853), p. 230. Balbo's aversion for the allegorical interpretation of the figure of Beatrice is well-known.

25 Giovanni Gentile in *Frammenti di estetica e letteratura* (1920), criticized De Sanctis for radicalizing the distinction between form and content in his theory of the *Commedia* and for treating it in terms of an unreconciled struggle between poetry and intellectualism.

26 *The Sacred Wood*, p. 163.

27 Eliot's preface to the 1928 edition of *The Sacred Wood* led even a critic as perceptive as Edmund Wilson to assume that Eliot had something like that in mind. See Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870 to 1930* (New York, 1959), p. 120.

28 *Selected Essays* (London, 1953), pp. 18-19.

29 *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (New York, 1964), p. 16.

30 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 27.

33 *The Waste Land, from Ur to Licht* (New York, 1972), p. 9.

34 *T.S. Eliot* (New Haven, 1964), p. 60.

35 *Op. cit.*, p. 63.

36 *A Dante Profile*, p. 34.

37 *To Criticize the Critic* (New York, 1965), p. 126. Eliot, in "Dante" (1929), applied the term phantasmagoric to Dante's hell as well. See *Selected Essays*, p. 246.

38 The Dantean analogues in Eliot's poetry, almost from the very beginning, served Eliot to order influences of other poets into a new synthesis. See Ron D.K. Banerjee, "Dante through the Looking Glass : Rossetti, Pound and Eliot", *Comparative Literature*, vol. xxiv, no. 2 (Spring 1972).

39 "Baudelaire and Eliot", *T.S. Eliot : The Man and His Work*, p. 310. See also Francis Scarfe, "Eliot and Nineteenth Century French Poetry", *Eliot in Perspective*, pp. 45-61. For a more extensive discussion of Baudelaire's influence on Eliot, consult Edward J.H. Greene, *T.S. Eliot et la France* (Paris, 1931), and for a general background, René Taupin, *L'Influence du Symbolisme français sur la poésie américaine 1910-20* (Paris, 1929), which remains valuable. A more recent addition is Kerry Weinberg, *T.S. Eliot and Charles Baudelaire* (The Hague, 1969).

40 It should be noted, however, that Eliot's view of allegory underwent considerable modification in his "Dante" (1929) essay. In this second Dante essay, written at the same time as "Ash Wednesday", where Dante's influence is perhaps at its most intense, Eliot saw allegory mainly in relation to Dante's style, rather than the 'structure' of the *Commedia*. He found it preeminently appropriate for Dante's visual imagination and the presentation of his vision in images : "Dante's attempt is to make us see what he saw. He therefore employs very simple language, and very few metaphors, for allegory and metaphor do not get on well together." *Selected Essays*, p. 243. Clearly, Eliot's views here are closely modelled upon those of Ezra Pound. See Mario Praz, *The Flaming Heart* (New York, especially the chapter on T.S. Eliot and Dante, as well as *Thomas Stearns Eliot*, 1958), Terzo Programma, *Quaderni Trimestrali*, 2, Roma, 1965.

BHAVABHÜTI'S *UTTARARĀMACARITAM* AND
SHAKESPEARE'S *THE WINTER'S TALE*
TWO VERSIONS OF ROMANCE

Mythili Kaul

In his book *The Classical Drama of India* Henry Wells observes that it is regrettable that Sanskrit playwrights have "so often been viewed negatively in relation to the Greeks and so seldom positively in relation to the Elizabethans." The Indian dramatists, he says, "shun tragedy, satire, naturalism, and the particular seriousness and involvement with life that leads to the most convincing character-delineation." Avoiding both the "harrowing depths of tragedy" and the "irresponsible hilarity of pure comedy", they strive after "serenity", the end of their art being "neither mimetic nor rationalistic" but "a pervasive awareness of an inner harmony" and "the creation of an aesthetic equilibrium". And he concludes that despite vast philosophical, moral and cultural differences, there is much "common ground between Shakespeare on the one hand and Bhasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti on the other."¹

The question that immediately arises is : which Shakespeare or which phase of Shakespeare ? For it is obvious from the above statements that the Sanskrit dramatists have nothing in common with the Shakespeare of the histories, the comedies, the 'satiric' problem plays or the tragedies. That leaves us with one phase—the last or 'tragi-comic' phase, and it is, indeed, the last plays of Shakespeare, the 'romances', with which the Sanskrit plays invite comparison. Interestingly enough the word 'serenity' which Wells uses has been used to describe the pervading mood of Shakespeare's last plays as well. Edward Dowden speaks of the "august serenity of Shakespeare's final period" which is characterized by "a spirit of deep or exquisite recreation"², and F.S. Boas, echoing Dowden, states that in the last plays Shakespeare leaving behind him the turbulent world of the tragedies "mounts into a serene region ... which is luminous with the tender glow of a tranquil evening sky."³

The similarity of mood, however, depends upon similarities of incident, plot, theme and above all, transcendence in the matter of attitude. The most immediately striking similarity, of course, is that of incident, and it stems from the abundant use of the so-called 'romance' materials by the Sanskrit dramatists as well as by Shakes-

peare in his last phase. Romances, or tales of love and adventure with scenes and incidents remote from everyday life, are usually among the earliest products of every culture. But the romance tradition never quite disappears, and in some periods is revived not only by fiction-writers but also by dramatists. Shakespeare's last plays are, as is well known, based on romances : *Pericles* on the anonymous *Apollonius of Tyre*, *Cymbeline* in part on the wager plot in Boccaccio, and *The Winter's Tale* on Greene's *Pandosto*. The sources of Sanskrit plays are love stories from mythology and legend, or, as in the case of *Uttararāmacaritam* the *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa* which combines epic and romance. These plays too can be described, as Shakespeare's last plays sometimes are, as 'dramatic romances'. All of them share the chief characteristic of romance literature, which is a sensational narrative of strange and startling incidents. Both Shakespeare and the Sanskrit playwrights give us a world of magic and enchantment, lost princesses, and the miraculous revival and recovery of kin long supposed dead. To cite just a few instances from Shakespeare, there is Thaisa's death and later 'resurrection' in *Pericles*, Imogen's death-like swoon in *Cymbeline*, her miraculous meeting with her long-lost brothers in the Welsh hills, Hermione's reported death and Perdita's being "cast out" followed by their reunion in *The Winter's Tale*. In Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*, the separation between husband and wife is the result of a sage's curse and the reunion takes place upon recovery of a missing ring from the maw of a fish. In Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattam*, the wife's reported death in a fire has likewise a happy outcome when she is restored to her husband in the end.

The romance conventions of disguise and mistaken identity are also used plentifully by both Shakespeare and the Sanskrit playwrights. In *Svapnavāsavadattam*, for instance, the disguised Vāsavadattā enters the room of her co-wife Padmāvatī (with whom she has taken service but who is unaware of her identity) and lies down on the bed next to her only to discover that her companion is not Padmāvatī but her estranged husband Udayana. Udayana, upon seeing her in the flesh but believing her dead, is led to conclude that what he beholds can only be a vision. In Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* there is the sensational incident of Imogen's waking from her swoon to find lying next to her the headless body of Cloten (dressed in her husband Posthumus' clothes) which leads her to conclude that Post-

As is perhaps to be expected in the strange and wonderful stories of romance literature, the supernatural plays a prominent part, and supernatural machinery is much in evidence in both groups of plays. In the Sanskrit plays the gods intervene in every crisis. When Śakuntalā is rejected by Duṣyanta, her mother Menakā, one of the heavenly nymphs, descends and bears her away. Similarly, in Bhavabhūti's play, the pregnant Sitā who in her travail casts herself into the river Gaṅgā, is preserved by the deities Gaṅgā and Pṛthvī, and later brought back to Rāma by them. In *Pericles*, Thaisa is discovered at Ephesus through the agency of Diana ; in *Cymbeline*, Jupiter appears to Posthumus in a dream and prophesies that all will be well ; the Delphic oracle and Antigonus' fantastic dream of Hermione figure in *The Winter's Tale* ; and in *The Tempest*, the entire action is directed by Prospero through his magical powers. Indeed, supernatural characters co-exist easily and happily with the human characters in these plays. Heavenly charioteers and nymphs, river goddesses and spirits of the air, move around as freely in the Sanskrit plays as Ariel does in *The Tempest*.

Like the romances, again, both groups of plays employ diversified settings ; the court and the forest or hermitage in the Sanskrit plays ; the court and the pastoral or remote islands in Shakespeare's last plays.

The most interesting similarity between the two groups, however, is that of plot and theme. The focus in both is on the family, and the plot involves first the separation and then the reunion of husband, wife and children. While the reunion almost invariably partakes of the miraculous, the separation is caused by the accident of fact as in the case of Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta, and *Pericles*, Thaisa and Marina ; by an external but human agency, as in *Cymbeline* where Cymbeline deliberately disrupts the union of Posthumus and Imogen by exiling Posthumus, and in *Svapnavāsavadattam* where Udayana's chief minister, in order to secure a politically advantageous marriage alliance, gives out that Vāsavadattā is dead ; or by a deliberate action on the part of the protagonist himself, as in *The Winter's Tale* and *Uttararāmacaritam*. But the subject of plot and theme needs detailed analysis and I propose therefore to narrow the discussion to one pair of plays—the last pair, which to my mind offers the most interesting study in comparison and contrast.

In both *The Winter's Tale* and *Uttararāmacaritam*, the protagonists

(Leontes and Rāma) abandon their pregnant wives. The jealous Leontes chooses to believe that Hermione has been unfaithful to him and that the child she is carrying is a "bastard". He rejects her publicly, she swoons and is reported dead, he repents instantaneously, but is reunited with her only after sixteen years. Rāma, too, has Sītā abandoned in the forest in a state of advanced pregnancy because the people question her chastity (since she had been abducted by Rāvaṇa) and do not accept the proof of the ordeal by fire which she had undergone before being accepted by Rāma. She gives birth to twin boys and is restored to her husband after twelve years.

In both these plays the lost wife is revealed to her husband in a highly dramatic manner. In *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes is taken to see the "statue" of Hermione, so life-like that it "descends" to music, casts its arms around Leontes' neck—and turns out to be Hermione herself. Even more theatrical is the 'recognition' in *Uttararāmacaritam* where Bhavabhūti employs the convention of the play-within-the-play. In Act VII Vālmiki presents a dramatization of Sītā's adventures after her abandonment. Rāma, one of the spectators, becomes so involved in the presentation and is so overcome by emotion that he swoons, confusing the stage Sītā with the real Sītā. The two in fact turn out to be one and the same person, Sītā herself having enacted her story on stage. Rāma realizes that he has witnessed the 'rebirth' of his family, and there is an ecstatic reunion. In each play, reconciliation with the wife is preceded by reconciliation with the children. In *The Winter's Tale*, the 'recognition' of Hermione is preceded by the 'recognition' and acceptance of Perdita, the child whom Leontes had rejected at birth and caused to be abandoned in the wilderness of Bohemia. In *Uttararāmacaritam* Rāma intervenes the combat between Lava and Candraketu, feels his heart go out to Lava and Kuśa, discovers who they are and is then reunited with Sītā.

These striking similarities, however, also serve to underline the differences between the two plays, differences of theme and attitude, which are themselves related to the differences between the two cultures and time periods. *Uttararāmacaritam*, to take up Bhavabhūti's play first, like *Śakuntalā* and *Svapnavāsavadattam*, is primarily a love story (a highly sentimental one at times). The first act, the famous "Picture-Gallery" episode, reveals at some length the married lovers' affection for each other and, through the numerous references

to Sītā's abduction, hints at their impending separation. After an intervening period of twelve years Rāma comes to the same forest where Sītā had been abandoned and where the eventual reconciliation will take place. Act III brings Rāma and Sītā together, though Sītā being rendered invisible to Rāma, he himself is unaware of her proximity. In this highly theatrical situation, made even more theatrical by their swoonings through excess of emotion, they uninhibitedly express their love for each other. This is the emotional climax of the play, the necessary preparation for the final resolution. For although the actual reunion is still four acts away, Sītā for the first time learns the real reason for her rejection, learns that her husband still loves her, and immediately the "[rankling] dart of abandonment and disgrace" is "plucked" out from her heart (III, 47).⁴

In the reunion between husband and wife the children have a part to play but it is a secondary part. While at the end of the play Sītā no doubt joyfully embraces her sons, reunion with them has not been the primary reason for her preserving herself through all her suffering. (As I shall point out, this contrasts with the case of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*.) Sītā has preserved herself for the love of her husband, and as soon as she hears his voice in the forest, she exclaims that she has come "back to life" (III, 7), repeating "This is life to me!" (VIII, 20) after her acceptance by Rāma.

Thematically, the children function as the cement and visible sign of conjugal love. When Sītā laments that she has "given birth unto sons", it is because her "noble lord has not kissed" their "unspotted lotus-like faces", and as Tamasā, a water nymph, puts it: "A child is the utmost perfection of the love [between man and wife]. It is the closest link that can hold them together." (III, 18) The children, Lava and Kuśa, play a more important role insofar as plotting is concerned. When the sacrificial horse is let loose in the forest Lava, feeling that his manhood is affronted by the proclamation of Rāma as "the one supreme hero of the seven worlds" (IV, 27), throws him a challenge by capturing the horse. This leads to a confrontation between Candraketu (Rāma's nephew and the protector of the horse) and Lava, and the consequent combat is brought to an end by Rāma who is passing by in his aerial car. Thus Lava's action is the means by which Rāma is brought to the spot where Sītā was abandoned. The play is not, therefore, as *The Winter's Tale* is, the "drama of generations". The sons are brought up in the same tradition as the

father and the values embodied by all three are identical. To Rāma, Lava and Kuśa represent "the very Science of Arms", "the Code of Chivalry", and "the sum total of all [good qualities]" (VI, 9), and to them Rāma seems "a great personage ... of some pre-eminent merit" whose "prowess" inspires devotion (VI, 10).

Both *Uttararāmacaritam* and *The Winter's Tale* have a plot which is chronological and linear. Both are in this sense 'tales'. But the sense of conflict and the diversity of values that we find in *The Winter's Tale* are not to be found in *Uttararāmacaritam*. Bhavabhūti's play undoubtedly has a dimension beyond that of *The Winter's Tale*, for while both are concerned primarily with the personal and the domestic spheres of life, in *Uttararāmacaritam* these are not separate from the public and the social. Between the personal and the public, however, there is no conflict. Rāma's abandonment of Sītā, while a personal and deliberate action, is determined by considerations which have nothing to do with his personal feelings: "What then ... may I do in this case? ... For good men ... propitiation of the people [must be] a sacred duty." (I, 41) Unlike Leontes, Rāma is not motivated by jealousy and suspicion. He knows that Sītā is innocent and pure but because his "worthy citizens and subjects ... did not wish my Queen to stay in the house, her, like mere chaff, in that void wilderness, I abandoned." (III, 33) His duty to Sītā has to be subordinated to the interests of a higher duty—duty to his state and his people. The introduction of this factor immediately reduces Rāma's *responsibility* for his action. It is forced on him. Though manifestly unjust and, as he himself calls it, a "detestable" action (I, 45) and an "unworthy" deed (III, 28), Rāma has to send Sītā away in keeping with the tradition of the Ikṣvāku race, a tradition exemplified by his father who banished his beloved son even though it cost him his life. Rāma constantly condemns himself as "a savage", "an untouchable criminal", "an outcast" (I, 45) and knows that without his queen the universe has become a "void ... a wasted wilderness", and his "body a mere abode of woes" (I, 47). His motives are misjudged by Sītā's friends, by her father, by Sītā herself. But his obvious suffering makes even Sītā relent and at the end he is vindicated before all. That there is nothing blameworthy about his conduct and that his initial action has been in accordance with what is required of an ideal king, is emphasized by the fact that before he takes Sītā back Arundhatī asks the "people from the city

and from the country" whether they will now accept as their queen "the dutiful daughter-in-law of the Solar race" whose "spotless character" had previously been attested to by the fire ordeal and the gods. It is only when they signify their assent that the hero and the heroine are united.

By contrast, the responsibility for the tragic situation in *The Winter's Tale* rests fairly and squarely on Leontes. In this play there is no question of public duty determining personal actions. Leontes' repudiation of Hermione is, indeed, an unnatural act, a sudden and uncontrolled fit of baseless suspicion and jealousy, the outcome, as Paulina says, of his "own weak-hinged fancy" (II.iii.118).⁶ This results in the estrangement from his friend Polizenes, the death of his son Mamillius, the supposed death of Hermione and the abandonment in Bohemia of the newly-born Perdita.

Rustic Bohemia provides a marked contrast to courtly Sicilia. Leontes' attitude towards his child is opposed to the reaction of the Shepherd who finds the infant. He too, like Leontes, concludes that it is the result of "some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door-work" (III.ii.71-72), but, unlike Leontes, he decides to "take it up for pity" (III.ii.73-74). A further contrast to the action at Leontes' court is provided at the sheepshearing festivities. In Sicilia, the rites of hospitality resulted in jealousy, suspicion, enmity and the destruction of the family unit. Here, however, they led to a strengthening of family ties. The Shepherd recalls with pride and affection his dead wife's behaviour on similar occasions in the past—how she was "Both dame and servant, welcomed all, served all;/ Would sing her song and dance her turn ... /On his shoulder and his", and drink to each of her guests (IV. iv. 57-60)—and he would have Perdita emulate her foster-mother. Further, his bidding "unknown friends" welcome to his feast as a "way to make us better friends, more known" (IV.iv.65-66), is a pointed reminder that in Sicilia even friends had become estranged and long-standing affection had turned into murderous hostility.

Thus *The Winter's Tale*, unlike *Uttararāmacaritam*, uses its diversified settings to underline a contrast of values and of human and family relations. The sophisticated court, lacking in humanity, perverts human relationships. The country is unsophisticated but rich in trust, goodwill and compassion. The court and the country represent thus complementary aspects of life and the court can be

regenerated only if a synthesis between the two ways of life takes place. This synthesis is affected through Perdita the shepherd-princess, the "queen of curds and cream" (IV.iv.161), who combines in herself the advantages of noble birth and the virtues of her pastoral upbringing. Unlike Lava and Kuśa's virtues which are the same as Rāma's and are indeed modelled on his, Perdita's virtues provide a corrective to those obtaining at court in the beginning of the play. Thus the 'recognition' and acceptance of Perdita are a necessary preparation for and prelude to the 'recognition' and acceptance of Hermione. Indeed, Hermione's first words are addressed to Perdita and she states that she has "preserved" herself for her daughter's sake (V.iii.127), unlike Sitā who has endured in the hope of seeing Rāma again. It is in this sense that the younger generation in *The Winter's Tale* plays an important thematic role. Through Perdita and Florizel (Polixenes' son and heir to the Bohemian throne) Sicilia and Bohemia are united in an inclusive harmony.

To sum up, while *The Winter's Tale*, through its contrast of the court and the pastoral, introduces matters of some social significance, the play is focussed firmly on the private life of a public figure and how he conducts himself in personal and domestic relationships. It is concerned with Leontes the man and not with Leontes the king, and his actions towards Hermione are not dictated by his public office. *Uttararāmacaritam* is without the sort of social significance which derives from the existence of contrasting values within a society. Its theme is entirely domestic: the survival against all odds of ideal love and ideal marriage. Yet, although the play deals with the personal sufferings of the hero, these sufferings arise because of his public position. In other words, *Uttararāmacaritam* stresses the fact that even the private life of a public personage is dictated by public considerations. And thus Rāma's conduct is lauded both because he governs according to the will of the people and because he sorrows constantly over his wife's banishment. He is noble both as a king and as a man.

It is in this differing emphasis on the public and private self, in the absence or presence of human conflict and, above all, in the matter of human responsibility, that the distinction between *Uttararāmacaritam* and *The Winter's Tale* lies. It is perhaps a distinction between an 8th century 'heroic' play and a 17th century 'modern' work. For, as in romance literature or in medieval tragedy,

in Bhavabhūti's play suffering springs from the malignity of fate rather than from human evil, and consequently the hero and the heroine are regarded with complete sympathy and admiration and are idealized. Being blameless, there is no need for the characters to 'grow' or change. But the distinction is also one between two different cultures : in one, man is divine and the hero has no darker or weaker side ; in the other, man is born in sin and easily falls, though he can be redeemed through 'grace' (a pattern which many critics see in *The Winter's Tale*).

Yet in the final analysis even Shakespeare's romances emphasize neither evil nor conflict and suffering but happiness and harmony. In this context it is worth noting that in both *Uttararāmacaritam* and *The Winter's Tale* the happy ending is a deviation from the source. In the *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa* there is no reunion of husband and wife for Sītā, refusing to submit to another test of her chastity, prefers to return to the bosom of her mother, Earth. In Greene's *Pandosto* not only is Bellaria, Hermiène's counterpart, really dead, but even Pandosto dies at the end, stricken by shame at the incestuous feelings he entertained towards his daughter. In altering Greene's story, Shakespeare no less than Bhavabhūti makes the point that evil and suffering are not the final reality—are, in fact, illusory. It is in this transcendent view of human destiny that Shakespeare's romances and the Sanskrit romance-dramas reveal their essential affinity.

NOTES

1 (New York, 1963), pp. 6-7, 53-54, 12.

2 *Shakespeare : A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (London, 1882), pp. 380, 403.

3 *Shakespeare and His Predecessors* (New York, 1896), p. 504.

4 References to *Uttararāmacaritam* are to the Harvard Oriental Series edition, ed. S.K. Belvalkar, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1915). Act and śloka numbers follow the quoted passage in the text.

5 References to *The Winter's Tale* are to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Hardin Craig (New York and Chicago, 1951). Act, scene and line numbers follow the quoted passage in the text.

INDIAN NOVELS IN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF INDIAN NOVELS A COMPARATIVE NOTE

K.S. Ramamurti

We have quite a few books and scholarly papers in which terms such as 'Indian literature in English' or 'Indo-Anglian literature' and 'Indo-English literature' come up for serious discussion.¹ While the definition of 'Indian literature' is fraught with difficulties even at the conceptual level, the terms 'Indo-Anglian' and 'Indo-English' have lent themselves to easier definitions, though they continue to be rather nebulous, ambiguous and interchangeable in their connotations and are yet to gain universal acceptance. The term 'Indo-Anglian' is often used with a certain measure of hesitancy and reservation in some circles, but there is at least agreement on what the term should mean. The term 'Indo-English', on the other hand, is being used variously to mean (i) Indian literature in English (ii) Indian literature in English translation (iii) British writing on India. It is in this context that one wonders why the scope of the term 'Indo-Anglian' should not be widened to include the term 'Indo-English' in the sense of modern Indian literature in English translation. The immediate reason for the suggestion has to be sought in the fact that many of the English versions of writings in Indian languages, at least the best among them, strike us more as second creations in English than as translations. This is true especially of the novels. The worthwhileness of the suggestion apart, a study in juxtaposition of these two categories of the Indian novel should help one see similarities between the two which, while far outweighing the differences, argue for their being treated as one rather than as two kinds of writing.

The affinities between these two kinds of writing have to be seen first of all in a historical perspective. The Indian novel in English had its genesis in the last quarter of the 19th century almost simultaneously with the rise of the novel in the Indian languages. A very significant factor in these developments was that some of the earliest Indian novels were written in English. Though the very first(?) Indian novel, namely Piyari Chand Mitra's *Alaler Gharer Dulal*² (1858) happened to be in Bengali, the next two novels which followed were in English. They were Bunkimchandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's*

Wife (1862) and Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta* (1874). These were again followed by B.R. Rajam Iyer's *Kamalambal Charithram* (1896) and A. Madhaviah's *Padmavathi Charitram* (1898). These two novels were in Tamil, but interestingly enough, both these men, pioneers of the Tamil novel, wrote novels in English as well. We have in fact both Tamil and English versions of some of the novels of these writers, such as Rajam Iyer's *Vasudeva Sastri* and Madhaviah's *Thillai Govindan* and *Muthu Meenakshi*. Both the English and Tamil versions of these novels were written by the authors themselves and Madhaviah also wrote a few novels exclusively in English, like *Clarinda* (1915) and *Lieut Panju* (1924). Similarly Romesh Chunder Dutt, one of the pioneers of the Bengali novel translated two of his novels into English, *Madhavi Kankan* into *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) and *Samsar* into *The Lake of Palms*, while some of his other novels like *Sivaji* and *Pratap Singh, the Last of the Rajputs* were translated by Ajoy Dutt. What is interesting about these English translations, whether they were made by the author himself or by others, is that they do not read like translations. Apart from the fact that Romesh Chunder Dutt was a highly gifted writer both in Bengali and English, author of many well-known works in English including books on history and English renderings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, his Bengali novels seem to have lent themselves to excellent rendering in English even in the hands of other translators. They bear the stamp of first rate English writing rather than that of mere translation.⁸ In fact, the quality of the English obtaining in all these novels is so good and the style and the idiom as well as the tone and the cadence so natural and pleasing, that one can hardly consider them as translations. Whether in the narrative or descriptive parts or in dialogues, the language of the novels of Romesh Chunder Dutt in the English translation displays qualities which one would associate with original writing in that language rather than with the language of translation, as some of the passages quoted below would testify :

The red glow of an Indian winter sunrise streaked the sky with its bright radiance. It witnessed a solitary wanderer crossing the broad Ganges in a little skiff on his way to Rajmahal. It also saw a young girl sitting alone on the steps of a temple in the palace gardens of Birnagar shedding the first bitter tears of womanhood.⁴

"Will this be our last meeting, sweet lady?" asked the disappointed prince, somewhat chilled by the cold reception.

"There should have been no meeting at all, Prince," calmly answered Mihr-ul-Nissa, "for I am a married wife and may not be seen even by the most exalted Prince or Potentate. ..."

"Cold words, these, Mihs-ul-Nissa, and I would fain believe them to be dictated by the formal duty of a wife than by the warm heart of a woman."

"A woman who is married, great Prince, has no heart but that of a wife."

"You speak like the great Kazi of Agra ! I did not seek you tonight, Mihr-ul-Nissa, to listen to texts from Koran "

"I speak like a woman, mighty Prince, who is married and wishes to be a faithful wife, and the Koran teaches us the duties of a wife ..."⁶

The veil fell softly and disclosed a face no longer proud, but radiant in its loveliness and suffused with a soft blush which heightened its nameless fascination. Persia, the land of song and poetry and fair women, owned no face of more voluptuous beauty ; and India, proud of her dark-eyed daughters, boasted of none more bewitching...

In vain have the limners of Delhi in after times attempted to paint that indescribable grace on ivory and canvas ; in vain have the bards of the West tried to describe in rich colours the Light of the Harem. The beauty of woman mocks the toil of the painter and the poet alike, and the beauty of Mihr-ul-Nissa was an inspiration which came with her and passed away with her...⁶

Passages like the ones quoted above should leave one in no doubt about the fact that the English translations of the novels of writers like Romesh Chunder not only rise to the heights to which the originals seem to have risen but also tend to surpass the originals in a new medium. The quality of the English translations of the novels of Romesh Chunder and Bankim reflects at once the quality of the Bengali originals and the strong Western element inherent in the culture and sensibility which have fed them, or else these novels could not have come off with such power and beauty in English translation whether the translations were made by the authors themselves or by others. The novels might be Indian in theme and sentiment but they are at the same time permeated by values, attitudes and patterns of thought and emotion which have in them a strong Western dimension. In fact, even Romesh Chunder and Bankim's Bengali writings had drawn part of their inspiration from Western literature

and thought, especially from English medievalism and Romanticism, and hence they turned out to be writings eminently suited to being rendered into English. This alone can explain the high quality of the English translations of the novels of Romesh Chunder and Bankim, whoever was the translator. The two passages quoted below, for instance, are both from the novels of Bankim—the first from what Bankim wrote originally in English and the second from a translation made by S.C. Mukherjee :

The palling blue of the starry heavens was now half covered by numbers of driving clouds, while one dense and settled mass of black hovered over the distant horizon and shed a sombre grey over the dimly seen outlines of the far-off tree-tops on its verge. A wild and fitful breeze occasionally hovered over the dark woods with an ominous sound and a few drops of pattering rain fell on the earth, on the leafy trees and on the luxuriant shrubbery.⁷

... but neither could they claim fellowship with Aesha's transcendental graces. The loveliness of some damsels is like the blossoming of the vernal Mallika (jasmine) fresh-blooming, closing for bashfulness, tender, serenely bright and deliciously fragrant ...⁸

One finds that the quality of the English rendering is almost the same in both which bears testimony to the view that these writings have inherent potentialities that qualify them for easy and impressive translation into English, not to speak of the translator's own knowledge and command of English. It would not be too much to suspect in this case that Bankim himself might have had a hand in the job of translating at least parts of *Durgeshnandini*, for stylistically the language of this novel is not very different from that of *Rajmohan's Wife*, originally written in English.

Thus a careful study of the English translations of the pioneers of the genre in India focusses attention on the striking similarities in the quality of English writing between the two kinds of novel under discussion. This is found to be so even in the works of B.R. Rajam Iyer, A. Madhaviah, Taraknath Ganguli and a few others.⁹ Since many of these early writers felt equally at home both in English and their own respective languages and could wield an equally powerful command in both, one cannot expect much difference between their English novels and the English translations of their Bengali or Tamil novels. It was a peculiar

historical circumstance which kept these two kinds of writing close to each other. They were close to each other not only in style, in the quality of their English expression but also in time, setting, mood and sentiment. This could not but be so because the two kinds of writing emerged on the Indian literary scene almost simultaneously, as parts of a new creative surge brought about by significant socio-economic changes, the rise of individualism in the life and letters of the age, the rise of prose and the impact of Western art forms and modes of thinking. Caught up in the main stream of this new creative surge and impelled by a love of and genuine delight in the use of English as a medium of self-expression, many of these early writers produced novels of both the kinds and a closer and more elaborate study of these novels in juxtaposition should certainly prove a very interesting and rewarding experience.

The brief foregoing findings made in respect of the older novels perhaps hold good too in the case of the more recent novels at least in a broad sense. Though there are not among the writers of recent times many novelists who write in English as well as in their own languages or translate their own works into English, there are other interesting factors which deserve attention. The novels of Tamil, Kannada, Bengali or Malayalam writers are mostly rendered into English by those who happen to be creative writers in English and very often with the active collaboration of the original writers themselves. Also, quite a few of the novelists in regional languages happen to be academic men, usually professors of English, and they themselves help the translators in their work to a great extent. This becomes in a way tantamount to their translating their works themselves. U.R. Ananthamurthy, author of the famous Kannada novel *Samskara*, is a professor of English at a university and is known for his scholarship in English studies; his translator is A.K. Ramanujan, the well-known Indo-Anglian poet. Similarly, Prema Nandakumar who has translated from the Tamil Jnanapeeth Award winning novel of Akilan, *Chithirappavai* into the *Portrait of a Woman*, is a scholar of considerable repute in English and besides, is a creative writer in Tamil as well as a critic and a reviewer in English. Again, one finds in Adil Jussawalla's *New Writing in India* a number of translations of poems, short stories and other writing from regional languages

into English most of which seem to have been the outcome of a collaborative endeavour in which the translator has been helped by an Indo-Anglian writer like Jussawalla himself. Hence the translation situation in these cases is not much different from that in those of the novels of Bankim, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Madhaviah. In short, the English renderings of some of the modern Indian classics happen to be more like new creations in English than like translations. They are, most of them, happy second creations coming from the pens of writers no less eminent or competent than the authors of the originals. We have also the examples of Tagore and Girish Karnad who have translated some of their works themselves, but there are not many like them. What is significant in this context is that one finds little difference between Indo-Anglian novels and the Indian novels in English translation. They are similar not only in theme and setting, in their conformity to most of the accepted norms of the genre, in their emphasis on the spatio-temporal dimensions of the plot, in their socio-moral concerns and in the world-view projected by them, but also in their use of language. Hence one wonders whether the Indian novels in English translation should be considered as a species different from the novels originally written in English.

The question cannot, however, be settled very easily for more reason than one. First of all, one has to concede a basic fact relating to the two kinds of writing. In the case of the Indian novel in English, the novel takes shape in English directly whereas in the English translations, the novels are born first in an Indian language and later on re-born in English. The latter are therefore "twice-born" in this sense. What does this mean to the reader or the critic? Will one find anything missing or lost in the process? There is certainly a difference in the 'experience' of reading these two kinds of novel and it is the business of criticism to explore the nature of this 'difference'. It has to be and can be explored in items of (i) sensibility (ii) point of view (iii) modes of telling and (iv) patterns of English expression used. Though a full-length examination of this question is far beyond the scope of the present paper, one might look at a few select examples.

Novels like U.R. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara*¹⁰ and K. Shivarama Karanth's *Mookajji's Visslons*,¹¹ for instance, call for

an interesting comparison with Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. The former two are translations from their Kannada originals and the latter is a novel originally written in English. The setting in all three is more or less the same area in Karnataka (Mysore) State and is mostly rural. The sensibility that informs each is a Kannada sensibility, a sensibility characteristic of the orthodox Brahmin community. The themes too relate, either partly or in full, to the Brahminical way of life, to its clash and conflict with modernity and to its movement towards regeneration on the one hand and to its speedy decline and degeneration on the other. One finds in all three a strong element of nostalgia for the peace and quiet, for the soul-satisfying values of a civilized past in the face of the on-coming decline and devaluation. There are constant juxtapositions of ideals, values and life-styles of yesterday with those of today and frequent warnings of the end of true Brahminism. In fact, one finds the culmination of such a view in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* where the very opening paragraph comes to grips with the heart of the matter stating that Brahminism itself, like life, love, marriage and death, is an illusion. Hence there is at certain levels a close thematic similarity in all these novels though in *Kanthapura* the theme is partly subordinated to the broader theme of the Freedom Movement. What is particularly interesting is that the narrator persona in *Mookajji's Visions* is an old woman, a Brahmin widow as in *Kanthapura*. Mookajji, like Achakka in *Kanthapura*, is the centre of consciousness in the novel and we see the past, present and even the future through her memory, consciousness and visionary musings, though there is in Mookajji a Tiresias-like complexity whereas Achakka is a comparatively simple and naive character. In *Samskara*, on the other hand, there is no such narrator persona, but here again we see events and happenings mostly through the consciousness of the protagonist, Praneshacharya who becomes thus the centre of consciousness in the novel. He is again a Brahmin who is old, not physically like Mookajji or Achakka, but in terms of moral and spiritual development. The tragedy of his life is that physical youth has its ugly triumph over moral and spiritual strength. Unlike Mookajji and Achakka, Praneshacharya is deeply involved in the action of the novel, practically at its centre. In short, the three novels are so similar in terms of the underlying theme, setting,

spatio-temporal concerns, values, attitudes, sensibility and narrative mode that it is difficult to isolate the one as 'Indo-Anglian' and the other two as translations.

This is not to say, however, that there are no differences. Differences there are if one would carefully look for them in the language of the texts. The language of *Kanthapura* is very different from that of *Samskara* on the one hand and from that of *Mookajji's Visions* on the other. Raja Rao writing in English experiments with the English language, trying to bend it, 'twist and turn' it in order to bring it closer to the idiom of the soil. The syntax and diction of both the descriptive parts and dialogues are closer to Kannada than to Queen's English and this is achieved self-consciously. While *Samskara* in translation does have a liberal sprinkling of Kannada words and expressions, its rhythms and cadences are not at all close to those of Kannada or any Indian language as in *Kanthapura*. By and large the English of *Samskara* is good *English*; it does not recapture the rhythms and resonances of an Indian language. One looks in vain for passages in *Samskara* which can recapture the rhythms of Indian life, the very pulse of that life as, for instance, a passage like the following does in *Kanthapura*:

Meanwhile, alas! Savithramma dies. An accident. She went to fetch water from the Champak well, slipped, fell, and died. Offers for marriage came to Bhatta from here and there. From Kuppur Suryanarayana, from Four-beamed-House Chandrasekharayya, and from Alur Purnayya. Purnayya has a grown-up daughter, who will 'come home soon'. She is twelve and a half years old, and in a year's time Bhatta can have someone to light his bath fire at least. A thousand rupees cash, and five acres of wet land beneath the Settur Canal. And a real seven-days marriage. Horoscopes agree marvellously. 'Well, if the heavens will it, and the elders bless it, let our family creepers link each other!' Laced bodice-cloth for each visitor, and a regular sari for the heads of the family. Carts after carts went to Alur, carts after carts, with the Front-House people, and when they returned eight days later they looked as though much ghee had gone into them and much laughter. Only the other day Puttur Satamma was saying, 'Never have we seen a marriage like Bhatta's. Such *Pheni*. After all, a Zamindar's house, my sister.'¹²

This is certainly not 'good English' but it has a more authentic ring, it makes us feel the very pulse of a community and its culture with all its virtues and faults. We hardly come across such passages in *Samskara* or again in *Mookajji's Visions*. The language of the

latter is, by and large, lifeless and colourless. It has the simplicity of the language of *Kanthapura* but not its verve, not its rhythms and music nor does it have the richness, density and colour of the language of *Samskara*. The following is typical of the language of *Mookajji's Visions* :

The Amma of this place is of still another kind. Any amount of praise or abuse will not influence her. No amount of begging will move her. Praise her or abuse her, she remains dumb. You should accept whatever she may give you – good or bad. I think she is not kind to beggars. This is what sounds reasonable to me. I would not assert that my way of thinking is correct. I am not that intelligent.¹³

One should only compare this passage with the description of Goddess Kenchamma by Achakka in *Kanthapura* ! It is only such close studies of the texts in juxtaposition that can bring home to us the difference between translation and original writing in English. But then, not all Indo-Anglian novelists handle the medium as Raja Rao does in *Kanthapura*. In fact, the language of *Samskara* does compare very favourably with that of not only many other Indo-Anglian novels but also with that of Raja Rao's own other novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*, especially in places where there are profound reflections on life, on Brahminism and on death. It is rather unfortunate that the language of *Mookajji's Visions* belongs to neither class and that it turns out to be too simplistic and lifeless in spite of the active part that Karanth himself seems to have taken in the translation as is evident from what he has stated in the preface. Curiously enough, the quality of Karanth's *Back to the Soil* as an English translation is much superior to that of the award-winning *Mookajji's Visions*. The quality of English apart, its appeal is more immediate and the story more gripping and meaningful. One cannot say, however, that the merit or fault lies in the English rendering alone. There may be other factors that determine the quality of each.

This is only one aspect of the question and this alone cannot settle any issue pertaining to the relative merits of the Indian novels originally written in English and Indian novels in translation. Some of the foregoing considerations notwithstanding, one feels that the two kinds of writing need not be strictly kept apart. One feels strongly on the point when one keeps in mind that, after all, both kinds are 'translations' in one way or other. As George Steiner

points out in *After Babel : Aspects of Language and Translation*, translation is a phenomenon which involves transmissions even within the same language from the past to the present. Whereas the barrier in translation from one language to another is the linguistic difference between the two, the barrier in this case is time. In fact, the time barrier is, in Steiner's view, more intractable than that of linguistic difference.¹⁴ Also, "the process of diachronic translation inside one's own native tongue is so constant, we perform it so unawares, that we rarely pause either to note its formal intricacy or the decisive part it plays in the very existence of civilization."¹⁵ Looking at the whole question from these points of view, one has reason to believe that every work is a 'translation'. Avoiding for the moment such an extreme view and other extreme views such as all translations are "a kind of illusion"¹⁶, one might at least be in a position to say that even Indian novels originally written in English do involve a kind of transmission of thoughts, ideas, feelings and sentiments from levels of consciousness in which the medium is an Indian language to levels where the medium is English. No 'experience' can be true or authentic for an Indian if it has not come to him through the language to which he was born and whether he is conscious of it or not, he is 'translating' that experience into English. So, what does take place is a kind of unconscious transmission, the nature of which has to be studied and explored with the help of more advanced and sophisticated theories involving knowledge of psychology, epistemology and other 'mental' sciences. The processes which involve the "internalization of translation by a multilingual sensibility"¹⁷ are too complex and subtle to be explained in a paper like this. But there is at least yet another aspect of the question that might be mentioned, if not discussed : it is the fact that Indian novels in English (those written originally in English) are full of actual translations as well as transliterations of words and expressions from one or more Indian languages into English. We have words which are English but whose meanings are very peculiar to the Indian context, like "regular sari", "laced bodice cloth and upper cloth", "to light the lamp of the house", "English Teacher", "Financial Expert", "rice balls", and so on. We have also syntactical patterns in which the words are English but the organization is Indian and which derive their meaning only in an Indian context, as for instance in "no rains", "aeroplanes in the sky", "all must

keep quiet", "he lighted the camphor", "horoscopes were exchanged" or in a mystical statement like "he knows".

A careful study of this dimension in Indo-Anglian novels should certainly lead to the view that they are also translations of another sort, not very different from novels which are acknowledged as translations. Conversely, there are even in some of the so-called translations, passages—descriptions as well as dialogues—that do not show any trace of the source language at all and might very well pass for original writing in English. The following passage from T. Janakiraman's *The Sins of Appu's Mother*, translated from the Tamil by M. Krishnan, should provide a good illustration :

Dandapani's practised skill had deserted him tonight. He could make his mind blank and inert at will, or concentrate totally on God—but tonight this power failed him. He opened his eyes. The stars were shining with an unusual brilliance above him, maybe because he had opened his eyes after keeping them closed so long. Yet the stars seemed to hang low in the heavens tonight ; one really hung quite low, like a brilliant pendant lamp. There was no breeze, and the world lay open around him. It seemed foolish to him to retire into blankness in the presence of all this.¹⁸

This passage is more or less a close English version of the Tamil original and yet one does not feel that it is a translation, for the translator had done the job so imaginatively as to avoid verbal translations of sentences and phrases which are peculiar to the genius of the Tamil language and in so doing has actually substituted in their place patterns of English expression which are an improvement on the original. In other words, what he has done is not translation but more or less a second creation, a new creation in English. The following extracts from the English translation of the famous Malayalam novel *Chemmeen* is yet another illustration of the way in which the translator recaptures the rhythms of life in a particular socio-cultural setting in a language which is alien to that culture :

Karuthamma's thoughts slipped into another line of reasoning. She was going away. She had to bid farewell to her life long friends. She had prepared herself to leave all. But she had not said her farewell to the moonlight on the seashore. She had not said her farewell to the ocean that had been transfigured by the moon. She had not taken leave of the enchanting song of the moonlight. And above all, she had not said her farewell to Parakkutti, the angel who had been sent to her.

Another fear gripped her. She might never again be able to give herself up completely to that song and that moonlight. Karuthamma wanted to go once again to the back of the boats stacked on the seashore, to enjoy for the last time the happiness that might be denied her forever.

She had run about that seashore as a child. She grew up to be a young woman. And she loved. And now she was going to be the faithful wife of a fisherman who would go on the stormy, swirling, treacherous ocean. Life would be earnest, life would be purposeful, life would have a new meaning. Before that, let her celebrate her last carefree day.¹⁰

Very early in the morning there was noise and bustle on the seashore. It was time for Palani to go to sea.

Before her marriage Karuthamma's elder neighbours had taught her some of the customs of a fisherman's daily life. Now she remembered one piece of advice.

"Are you going straight to the boat", she asked anxiously.

Palani did not understand what was in her mind. "Yes. Why?"

"Those who work on the sea should not get up from their beds and go to work." She said.

"Then how should they go?"

"Those who go to the sea should be clean and pure."

Palani stood perplexed.

"What are you saying", he asked.

"Bathe before you go", she said shyly.

She bathed him. She too, had her bath.

"Have you had your bath, Son?" one of the elder fishermen asked him when Palani reached the seashore.²⁰

A very simple conclusion to which studies along these lines can lead, is that English renderings of the Indian novels, at least the best among them, show merits and characteristics which argue for their being considered as Indian novels in English. There can be nothing wrong in their being treated as Indian novels in English for all academic purposes including teaching and research, provided however, due attention is paid to the bilingual dimension in the works and to the processes of translation and transcreation that have shaped them. A novel is in fact no more 'translatable' or paraphrasable than a good poem because the language of fiction is, as emphasized by David Lodge²¹, as unique and individual as that of poetry and therefore defies complete translation into another language. This is the very reason why, in the hands of a good translator who is sensitive to the nuances of both the languages, the translation becomes a new creation. If that is so, there is certainly

a case for re-christening all good English translations of novels in Indian languages as Indian novels in English.

NOTES

1 These terms have been discussed in K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English*, V.K. Gokak's *English and India* and in Sujit Mukherjee's paper, "Indo-English Literature—An Essay in Definition" in *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, ed. M.K. Naik. More recently the question has been raised and discussed in Amarjit Singh's paper "Contemporary Indo-English Literature—An approach", in *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, ed. M.K. Naik (Madras, 1979).

2 Piyari Chand Mitra's *Alaler Gharer Dulal* in Bengali was published in 1854. It is considered to be the first Indian novel, though the claim has been made on behalf of *Yamuna Paryatam* (1837) and *Phulmani o Karunar Vivaran* (1852). But these are more didactic pieces which do not exemplify all the characteristics of realistic prose fiction to the extent to which Bankim's *Rajmohan's Wife* and Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta* do. Hence *Rajmohan's Wife* should be considered the first real Indian novel and it is significant that it happens to be written in English.

3 The novels of Romesh Chunder Dutt have been discussed at length in K.S. Ramamurti, *The Rise of the Indian Novel* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Madurai University, 1973).

4 *The Slave Girl of Agra*, new impression (Calcutta, 1922), p. 99. (The book was originally published by T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1909).

5 Ibid., p. 130-32.

6 Ibid., p. 139.

7 *Rajmohan's Wife* (1874) *Bankim Rachanavali*, III, ed. J.C. Bagal (Calcutta, 1969), p. 5.

8 *Durgesa Nandini or the Chieftain's Daughter—A Bengali Romance*, trans. S.C. Mookerjee (Calcutta, 1880), p. 137.

9 For a full-length discussion of the novels of these writers see K.S. Ramamurti, op. cit. These writers have been discussed briefly in a few papers and articles subsequently published by the author in journals like *The Literary Half-Yearly*, Vol. XV, no. 1 (January 1974), *Vagartha* 19, 1977 and *Journal of the Madras University*, Vol. LI, no. 2 (July 1979).

10 (Delhi, 1976).

11 Trans. T.S. Sanjeevi Rao (Bangalore, 1978).

- 12 (London, 1933 ; sec. edn., 1974), pp. 32-33.
- 13 Op. cit., p. 119.
- 14 (London, 1975), p. 28.
- 15 Ibid., p. 29.
- 16 H.H. Anniah Gowda, "Translation", paper presented at the *Seminar on Comparative Literature*, Autonomous P.G. Centre, Tiruchirapalli, January 1981.
- 17 George Steiner, op. cit., p. 119.
- 18 (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 71-72.
- 19 Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Chemmeen*, trans. Narayana Menon (Bombay, 1978), p. 95.
- 20 Ibid., p. 122.
- 21 *Language of Fiction* (London, 1966), pp. 18-20.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE WESTERN CRITICAL PREMISES AND INDIAN LITERARY PRACTICES

Swapan Majumdar

More than thirty years ago Ezra Pound complained :

Comparative Literature sometimes figures in university curricula, but very few people know what they mean by the term or approach it with a considered, conscious method.¹

But for his eminence, one might have retorted, yet it was understood by more people than would appreciate his poetry. Arguing apart, one might legitimately ask, should CL as a discipline have as a matter of necessity a theory of its own or aesthetics, or inherit the universal sources of literary criticism ? Is an Aristotle the reserved copyright of the Greeks or a Horace, else a Longinus, of the Romans ? Aren't they the springboard for the entire gamut of Western criticism ? Who would therefore endeavour to ascertain the 'pure' indigenous critical elements in, say, English, French, German, Italian or Russian literatures as distinguished from alien permeations among them ? Did not Sidneys, Schlegels, Sainte-Beuves or the Stuttgart critics cross the boundaries of their respective literatures and contribute to the corpus of criticism as such ? In fact, it was primarily in criticism that theorists could breathe in a wider horizon of literary experience, perhaps long before the creative artists came out of their self-styled confines to be emulated by a foreign stimulant. And after all what is a theory ? Isn't it the deduction of the common factors present in a maximum number of specimens observed ? Of course, no theorist would ever pretend to claim an absolute truth for his province, but would certainly put forward at the same time a few tenets as functional universals, in the case of CL mostly deduced from diverse language-based literatures. It is all right, then, if CL does not parade its brigade of critics armoured as it were with only one brand of critical tools. CL has never been shy of borrowing whatever commendable it comes across in any discipline—be that literature or other arts, or any other branch of knowledge that contributes to interpreting a piece of literature—a 'text'—in terms of the reality we are in.

Seen from this wide angle aperture CL turns out to be a rather roomy discipline and would accommodate in its fold any parallel formulation temporally close or distant, similar or dissimilar in spirit

between two or more literatures. It is one of the reasons why the second generation liberal promoters of the Discipline could not altogether dispense with the concept of General Literature even while professing the cause of CL. Strikingly enough, the concept still clings to the title of the *CL Yearbook*, even though the founder of the journal Werner P. Friederich did himself admit :

I do not quite know what General Literature is, and for years I have been trying to find a learned article by some learned man who would unscramble the various definitions ... so that, in retrospect, we will at last know what exactly our *Yearbook* is supposed to do.²

At this point, one might of course help me stand corrected by reminding me of the fact that this particular sort of vacillation ensues from none other than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe himself who is by common acclaim the decided originator of the concept of *Weltliteratur*. Let me quote here two excerpts from Goethe exemplifying his ambivalence while the idea had been nestling in him :

Everywhere we hear and read of the progress of the human race, of the broader view of international and human relations. Since it is not my office here to define or qualify these broad generalities, I shall merely acquaint my friends with my conviction that there is being formed a universal world literature ...³

but he does not stop here and continues—and that is of greater consequence to us at the moment :

... in which an honourable role is reserved for us Germans. All the nations review our work ; they praise, censure, accept, and reject, imitate and misrepresent us, open or close their hearts to us. All this we must accept with equanimity, since this attitude, taken as a whole, is of a great value to us.⁴

This last part of the quotation makes clear what Goethe's priorities were. The concept of WL was for him a sort of antidote against the 'pedantic pride' of the Germans and though he categorically stated, "National literature means little now, the age of *Weltliteratur* has begun"⁴, he could not help feeling gratified with the response German literature was meeting with on the Continent. That is, even when he deprecated the concept of NL, he still could not shed nationalist sentiments. And finally his WL comes to be an amalgam of national literatures and I quote again from him :

General world literature can only develop when nations get to know all the relations among all the nations.⁵

Obviously the repetition of the emphatic *all* had resulted from his zest for driving a thesis home ; but excess apart what remains is that Goethe could not wholly do away with the concept of NL either, rather it provided the microcosmic base for his macrocosmic concept. It may also be noted here that with regard to the idea of WL Goethe was not altogether free from the average white man's practice of equating WL with European literature. Even his *West-Österlicher Divan*, a product of the transitional passage from the Romantic to the Classic in Goethe's literary career, seems rather ambitiously titled when we find that Shiraj—the city of the poets in Persia—was but heavily superimposed by the then Weimar. His proposed series on the mutual confluences among some of the major literatures of the Continent for *Über Kunst und Alterthum VI*, was to be entitled 'European i.e., World Literature'. Yet what was subdued in Goethe turned more vehement in the high noon of empire and the colonies were never slow in tuning themselves up with the Master's Voice.

What Professor René Wellek identifies as the "crisis"⁶ of CL and holds the French school responsible for, seems to have been ingrained from the very beginning in the methodological uncertainty between NL and WL and their consequent position with regard to the CL frame of reference. The term 'General' was perhaps conceived of as a checkword for 'National' which, Professor Wellek thought, was tantamount to the "basically patriotic motivation of many comparative literature studies in France, Germany, Italy, and so on, [that] has led to a strange system of cultural book-keeping, a desire to accumulate credits for one's nation by proving as many influences as possible on other nations or, more subtly, by proving that one's own nation has assimilated and 'understood' a foreign master more fully than any other."⁷ But are such imbalances singularly detrimental to CL and not to any other discipline ? It seems, if Professor Wellek is scared of the emphases on facts, he is no less disquiet about the preponderance over values that attend on literature :

Literary scholarship today needs primarily a realization of the need to define its subject matter and focus. It must be distinguished from the study of the history of ideas, or religious and political concepts and sentiments which are often suggested as alternatives to literary studies.⁸

Professor Wellek's demand for an unassailable autonomy for literature is so exclusive that he is not happy even to see it as an 'alter-

native' to other human activities. This stance, to my mind, is as inquisitorial as wishing to reduce literature to one of the many components of national character. The business of CL is certainly not to blur and obliterate the distinctive features of different literatures and to marshal these under the command of General Literature, but to bring in full relief the distinguishing areas of their originality. Ironically enough, it is because of this predilection for NL—much too deplored by the Anglo-American critics as a methodology—that CL has struck roots in the Third World nations and in India in particular. If the qualitative epithet in '*Comparative Literature*' does not happen to be a mere pleonasm, it is up to the comparatist to justify it. What we call Western literature, oblivious of geographical authenticity, includes besides the literatures of Europe those of the Americas as well as those of Australia. Though physically separated from the mainland of Europe, these literatures inherit virtually the same legacy as those of the Continent. Graeco-Roman culture as it underwent the Christian vicissitudes provided the matrices for their literary values. Western literature as such is composed, then, of the national literatures like English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and so on, each having a certain linguistic base as well. IL like its African and Latin American counterparts also forms a community of national literatures no less robust than Western literature without only literary semblances counting for their commonness but a common ethos as well equally manifest in all the components. IL in all propriety then should be compared not with any single literature of the West, but with the concept of Western literature as a whole, while the regional languages and literatures should be assigned the status of NLs in India. The political connotation of a 'nation' and hence of 'national', therefore, is not applicable here.

In the West a nation is conceived of on more than one plane : a large territorial group with common citizenship rights differentiating it from other similar groups ; an independent political unit ; a state which is coterminous with a society⁹ ;—but all from the vantage point of the society and/or the state. In India, on the contrary, it conveys, as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo, the idea that

The nation or community is an aggregate life that expresses the Self according to the general law of human nature and aids and partially fulfils the development and the destiny of mankind by its own development and the

pursuit of its own destiny according to the law of its being and the nature of its corporate individuality.¹⁰

This basic characteristic of the sub-continent—an uninterrupted continuity absorbing a corporate individuality through its processes of covert change—makes the application of the CL methodology to the Indian context all the more profitable in tracing the rudiments of literary tradition cognate with organic relationships and continuity within a national corpus of literary texts. In this sense a text is not only a *product* of a tradition but also exerts a *pressure* on it.

Here too a line of differentiation may be drawn between the Western and Indian literary traditions. As I have shown elsewhere,¹¹ the literary history of India is decidedly different from the Western literary history and hence calls for a new mode of periodization altogether and consequently a new approach as well to literary criticism. In India the idea “not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence” did not remain “a perception”¹² as T.S. Eliot viewed it, but was itself a reality all the time. Because of this very continuative character of the Indian tradition we cannot pledge to a single method of criticism which would be sufficient to appreciate the corpus of IL as a whole. Could we mechanically use the Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic or Western aesthetics as the case may be to evaluate the literatures produced in the course of India’s history? Or use any one of the three ignoring the gaps whatsoever in the views and values of the people who formulated these? We should bear in mind that a prevailing set of rules which determines the author’s position on the form and content of texts, equally regulates the awareness of the reader on the receiving end. And in India the sets having changed more than once, the fortunes of the authors remained renegotiable from generation to generation because of the very continuity. But contrary to all expectations, till very recently the Western literary concepts and tools have been applied to Indian literature almost as sacrosanct. And by Western our critics often denoted the English-speaking world, in most of the cases further delimiting it to the British critics who in their turn preferred to draw premises mostly from their own national literary experiences. It is by now more or less accepted that this was due to a colonial lag which in many instances still casts its long shadow over us. That explains why a Coleridge, an Arnold or a Bradley would have the final say in our literary estimation and an F. or an A.W. Schlegel or a Taine or a Croce

would be mentioned only cursorily. Even as an attitude, a mention of these names would be considered akin to showing off, whereas a paucity of knowledge in the British authors and institutions would be deemed an unpardonable offence on the part of an Indian literary practitioner. Why our poets and critics alike were enamoured of an Yeats, an Eliot or a Pound while they hardly displayed any interest in poets like Rilke or Valéry or Mayakovski, can also be explained in the same way. Things were of course no better in other genres such as the novel where even a Maugham or a Huxley would be more reverentially mentioned than a Thomas Mann or a Camus. Certainly I don't mean to suggest on these grounds that had our predecessors been exposed to continental literature or imbibed the non-English critical canons, the situation would have been any better, but that could perhaps have resolved some of the dichotomies resulting as it were from an incompatibility of bringing together the Eastern and the Western philosophies of literature.

II

Long before any theoretical categorization had been made on this issue, Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) as a creative writer felt the challenge. In a letter as early as 1860 he wrote to his actor-friend Kesavchandra Ganguli :

In the great European Drama you have the stern realities of life, lofty passion, and heroism of sentiment. With us it is all softness, all romance. We forget the world of reality and dream of Fairylands. The genius of the Drama has not yet received even a moderate degree of development in this country.¹³

What critical lexicography did he have at the back of his mind? Ostensibly, the selection of words betray Madhusudan's preferences here, but it may be recounted in this connection that so far as the creative process is concerned he made a compromise by fashioning Indian stories drawn from the puranas and the epics into a Western mould, where his characters too were initiated into an occidental *Weltanschauung*. In Bankimchandra Chatterji (1838-94), a later contemporary of Madhusudan and a great artist in prose, however, we find the other face of the compromise. No less aware of the differences

in approach in the two points of view he attributed them entirely to generic distinctions. Comparing Kālidāsa and Shakespeare he says :

This play of Shakespeare is comparable with the ocean, Kalidasa's one with the Garden of Nandana. No comparison can be made between a garden and an ocean. Whatever is good and beautiful, whatever is fragrant and sonorous, whatever pleases and makes us content are to be found in abundance, in mounds, in immeasurable quantities in the Nandana. And whatever is deep, turbulent, fitting, grim are in the ocean.¹⁴

And finally he ascribes this difference to the fact that

What is called a *Nāṭaka* in India is not indeed the same as what is called a Drama in Europe. Both are performing arts no doubt, but the European critics mean a shade more when they talk of the Drama.¹⁴

But no sooner did the point of view shift than the estimation too began to change. Pertaining to a similar comparison between the beliefs of the two dramatists as evinced in their *Śakuntalā* and *The Tempest* Tagore (1861-1941) assumed a standpoint altogether different from his predecessor's. Rabindranath wrote almost as a counter-evidence to Bankimchandra's endorsement :

In *The Tempest* it is all oppression, malevolence and torture—in *Śakuntalā* unanimity, tranquillity and compassion. In *The Tempest* nature has assumed the form of man, yet has failed to unite with it by the bond of the soul. In *Śakuntalā* trees and plants, birds and animals have besides retaining their innate nature acted in concert with Man.¹⁵

The primary overwhelming ecstasy over whatever came from the West was gradually being neutralized by a growing earnestness to discover the roots of Indianness in literature. The silent battle, however, had been pitched not on academic grounds but in the councils of alien administrators. In a fit of imperial fever Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59) delivered on 2 February 1835 the infamous Minute which was to determine the course of Indian education for the following 150 years :

... a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.

The question now before us is simply whether, ... we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, wherever they differ from those of Europe differ for the worse, and whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical

doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter.¹⁶

Of course, had the Indians been in a privileged position the reading would have been entirely different. They would

... dismiss the Iliad as a crude and empty semi-savage and primitive epos, Dante's great work as a nightmare of a cruel and superstitious religious fantasy, Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian of considerable genius with an epileptic imagination, the whole drama of Greece and Spain and England as a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors, French poetry as a succession of bald and tawdry rhetorical exercises and French fiction as a tainted and immoral thing, a long sacrifice on the altar of the goddess Lubricity ...¹⁷

Viewed from either of the points of view "such a mass of absurdities", "such ridiculous phillipic", Aurobindo warns us in the same breath, would land us nowhere. Yet Western models continued to be regarded as *ne plus ultra* so far as the Indian response was concerned. Shakespeare, Byron and Scott became the yardsticks to gauge the relative merit of an Indian author. Consequences were obviously dire. To take examples from drama, K.P. Khadilkar (1872-1948), the pioneering Marathi playwright, was so captivated by the characters of Hamlet and Iago that in his play cast mostly on a historical frame, *Savāi Madhavarāo*, projected in the character of Nānā Phaḍnavis a reflection of the wavering Prince of Denmark, while in the same play the prelate Keśavaśāstri is portrayed as malignity incarnate like Iago, though not altogether motiveless. Yaśodā resembles Ophelia at times. And in scattered patches any character is capable of making an echo of one or the other Shakespearean dialogue. The Bengali plays of Dvijendralal Ray (1863-1913) also became a happy collage so to speak of several Shakespearean characters. Tragedy gave way to pathos and the fearful universe was replaced by a cruel world. While fate had been amoral in a tragedy, goodness led up to fate in these mangled versions; the implacable faculties were substituted by consoling qualities and finally while one generated life-affirming tragic joy, the other was pervaded with life-denying sadness.¹⁸

Most of such 'creative efforts' which display a direct literary transport between the East and the West,—not to speak of Shakespeare alone, the list may be updated to Brecht whose Indian versions like *Himmathāi* (Bengali) and *Tin Pāysācā Tāmāśā* (Marathi) or *Insāf*

kā Gherā (Hindi) or *Sājāpur ki Śāntibāi* (Chhattīsgaḍi) and a host of other plays, almost induce us to believe that it is but the fate of such literary transactions to be abandoned as futile enterprises in what Robert Escarpit defines as 'Creative Treason' :

It is simply a shifting of values, a rearrangement of the poetic pattern. It is no longer the book as it was written, but it would be absurd to pretend that it is something else, something entirely foreign to the original creation.¹⁰

I believe, like other Western critical premises this concept too is restrictive to the problems that evolve out of endogenous confrontations within a homogeneous cultural milieu where only mass and moment may vary as far as individual choice is concerned. But in respect of literatures representing contraposed views of life altogether—as extreme as the Asiatic and the modified fatalism to use John Stuart Mill's classic differentiation—the insensibility not to treat a literature, a period, a genre, even a unit of it—again a 'text'—as unique and hence the base, is as Claudio Guillén calls it in his celebrated *Literature as System*, "an atomistic fallacy"¹¹ in critical methodology. Formerly, it was the vocation of the CL theorist to look at a text from a perspective of a chain of 'given' experiences, a notion of literature as a universal. But now with us comparatists, it all is to begin the other way round, to use the sociologists' terminology from the 'field trips' into texts. In this structure the text would be in the "isthmus of the things". Ours is a move, then, from text to tradition, from criticism to methodology, from pattern to structure, from experience to system. And IL provides us with inexhaustible combinations of such systems. But to work these out is our onerous responsibility and we can't remain complacent leaving it to the care of our fellow comparatists in the West.

NOTES

1 *Literary Essays* (London, 1954), quoted in Roberts J. Clements, *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline* (New York, 1978), p. 1.

2 *The Challenge of Comparative Literature and Other Addresses* (Chapel Hill, 1970), p. 26.

- 3 *Über Kunst und Alterthum VI*, I (1827) in H.-J. Schulz & P.H. Rhein eds., *Comparative Literature : The Early Years* (Chapel Hill, 1973), p. 5.
- 4 J.P. Eckermann's conversations with Goethe on 31 January 1827 in *ibid.*, p. 6.
- 5 Notes for the Introduction to the German translation of Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* (1830) in *ibid.*, p. 10.
- 6 "An artificial demarcation of subject matter and methodology, a mechanistic concept of sources and influences, a motivation by cultural nationalism, however generous—these seem to me to be symptoms of the long-drawn-out crisis of comparative literature." "The Crisis of Comparative Literature", *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven, 1963), p. 290.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 289.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 293.
- 9 "Nation", Hugo F Reading ed., *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (London 1977), p. 137.
- 10 *The Human Cycle* (Pondicherry, 1949), p. 83.
- 11 "The Periodization of Indian Literature: A Probe into the Problems of Literary History", *JJCL* 22 (1984), pp. 134-43.
- 12 "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Prose* (Harmondsworth, 1963), pp. 22-23.
- 13 Kshetra Gupta, ed. *Madhusūdan Racanāvalī* (Bengali) (Calcutta, 1974), p. 571.
- 14 "Śakuntalā, Mirandā o Desdimonā", *Vividha Prabandha*, Jogeschandra Bagal ed., *Bankim Racanāvalī*, Vol. II (Bengali) (Calcutta, 1974), pp. 208 & 209 respectively. Translation mine.
- 15 "Śakuntalā", "Prācīn Sāhitya", *Ravindra-Racanāvalī*, Visva-Bharati, Vol. V (Bengali) (Calcutta, 1974), p. 525. Translation mine.
- 16 H. Sharp comp., *Selections from Educational Records 1781-1839* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 109 & 110-11.
- 17 Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 14 (Pondicherry, 1972), p. 257.
- 18 Points of contrast collated from D.J. McCutcheon, "Tragedy and Pathos", *JJCL* 6 (1966), pp. 60-85.
- 19 " "Creative Treason" as a Key to Literature", *YCGL* 10 (1961), p. 20.
- 20 "The concern of the historian is with the fact that a poem or a novel has belonged to an organized whole considered as a historical occurrence and thus been brought into one of the "orders" that societies strive to build. Insofar as it did so belong, the individual work of art did not merely become an additional unit in a sum of separate units. It entered a structural whole, a system, among whose parts significant and reciprocal relations existed.
"The inability to perceive these relations is what one might call the "atomistic fallacy" in literary studies." *Literature as System* (Princeton, 1971), p. 5.

Paper read at the Second Congress of the Indian National Comparative Literature Association at Tiruchirapalli, 11-13 January 1985.

Professor Amiya Dev was kind enough to suggest some stylistic changes which are gratefully acknowledged.

THE POET AND THE PEOPLE MEDIEVAL INDIAN LITERATURE

Sisir Kumar Das

Although it is not wrong to describe medieval Indian literature as a religious literature, it can be misleading to a great extent. The description seems apt when one considers that the literature written in different Indian languages in the medieval period is constituted of adaptations and transcreations of the Sanskrit epics, translations of religious texts like the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata*, and of course, of a large quantity of poems written in praise of gods, some pan-Indian, some regional, under the direct inspiration of various religious sects that became dominant during this period. The dominance of religion over the poetic activities was so complete that one hardly finds the existence of any powerful stream of secular literature, with notable exceptions of some court poetry and folk ballads and songs. Even if we are doubtful about the validity of the distinctions between the sacred and the profane in Indian religious activities, the poets' overwhelming concern for religion may appear slightly intriguing.

Medieval Indian literature, unlike the classical Sanskrit, is a popular literature, a literature written in the regional languages, more or less in a familiar and intimate diction, and avowedly for the benefit of the people. It is natural to expect that a literature of that kind should not be confined exclusively to religious matters but reflect the mundane concerns of the people. Moreover there is no reason to believe that the medieval Indian poet inherited only a religious literary tradition. Despite the fact that the Brahmins and the Buddhists and the Jains had created a vast body of canonical literature, the ancient Indian literature produced in Sanskrit and Pali and in ancient Tamil was predominantly secular. During the declining days of Sanskrit court poetry there was no indication that all literary activities were destined to be submerged under religion. Religious literature was flowing side by side with the secular and it was but natural to expect that their identities would remain distinct in the following periods. Though the two great Sanskrit epics, often described as *itihāsa* (stories of the past), contain a lot of religious materials, they are primarily stories of human beings and of human problems, and in spite of occasional supernatural interventions in them, they remain secular works. Sanskrit court poetry, as well as

the *aham* and *puram* poetry of the Sangam Tamil, breathe a spirit of joy and beauty and of mundane pleasure, not of Hindu-Buddhist ideals of asceticism. Contrary to the Western view that asceticism is a dominant feature of ancient Indian poetry, the poets both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, present a strong and a passionate attraction for the material world. In his early work *Rtu Saṃhāra*, Kālidāsa sings the praises of uninhibited joy and ecstasies of physical union and sensuousness of nature ; and in his mature writings he never projects asceticism as the one and the only ideal of man, but a social order where everything in man's life finds its due. In fact, barring a few exceptions, ancient Indian literature is a secular literature. The phenomenal growth of a religious literature overshadowing the growth of all other types of literature in the medieval period, therefore, appears to be rather intriguing.

One may argue that since medieval Indian literature emerged and developed for the consumption of the common man, the medieval poet rejected the classical tradition lock, stock and barrel. Classical literature was meant for the elite, it was highly artificial and often excessively erotic, and rarely did it reflect the aspirations of the common man. The classical poet working under the constraints of elite patronage developed some special literary conventions and indulged in issues in conformity with the taste of his patron. Those conventions were hardly acceptable to the medieval poet for obvious reasons. But it is not true that he rejected the classical tradition altogether. Even the erotic poetry found a place of honour in medieval religious literature.

The classical poet borrowed various elements from contemporary life and drew material from the vast quarry of peoples' literature. This assumption, I hope, will not meet serious objections. Whatever the classical poet borrowed from peoples' literature was refined by him and was made a part of elite literature. The medieval poet, too, exploited the contemporary folk literature and refined the material he borrowed, but made it a part of a religious literature. In order to accommodate all types of literature within a religious literature he had to broaden its scope to such an extent that the distinctions between the religious and the secular became almost obliterated and often irrelevant. If one is still inclined to describe such a literature as religious, one must remember that it is not a

as T.S. Eliot once pointed out as the alleged limitation of religious poetry.

II

Any critical examination of a literature such as this must try to answer two important questions. Why did a particular group of poets at a certain point of time feel it necessary to express their artistic feelings through a religious framework and consequently, how did a religious framework serve the purpose of literary expression fully and effectively. The search for answers to these questions invariably leads a critic to the examination of the relation between literary and social forces even when he is not primarily interested in their interdependence.

Medieval Indian literature was a popular literature and the medieval Indian poet was committed to the creation of this type of literature. By popular literature I do not mean a sub-standard literature, a literature created primarily to entertain and amuse, or to gratify the baser instincts of man or to create a channel of escape to the world of fantasy from the harsh realities of life. By the term popular literature I mean a literature that emerges out of the total activities and the social and moral concerns of the people at large, a literature that tends to remain as close as possible to the people, and consequently whose value is judged and determined by its role in the life of the people. The medieval Indian poet tried to create—and he was more or less successful in this exercise—a literature of this kind. He created it partly by reorganizing certain traditions of classical literature, and mainly through an entirely new experiment. And in both cases the immediate impulse came from the changes or attempted changes in the existing social fabric.

A group of poets, many of whom were educated Brahmins, translated or transcreated the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Some of them translated the *Bhāgavata* and at least one of them wrote a commentary on the *Gītā*. The fact that some of the poets in this group were non-Brahmins (Sarala Dasa of Orissa, for example) strengthens the point I am about to make. The choice of the texts by these poets show very clearly, though none of them expressed it explicitly, that they were intent upon creating a new literature that will not only entertain, but instruct the people, that will not be

confined to the elite and the educated, but will be available to the masses, and that will not depict just war and love, but will present certain ideals before the people. These poets worked at different places, wrote in different languages and had hardly any knowledge of one another's activities. Yet they all strove to achieve a common goal. They employed the living speeches of the people which lacked a distinguished literary tradition of their own. The motivations of such translations and transcreations and commentaries were to uphold the traditional socio-religious values, to revitalize the moral norms of society, now against the degrading religious practices and now to consolidate the Hindu community to meet a possible challenge from the ruling Muslims, and now to expound the theories of ideals of kings and the state. The literature produced in this process was not identical with the texts of the source languages. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, in particular, underwent a great change, both in spirit and in structure, and the changes were brought about deliberately. The poets changed the secular hero into a divine hero, discarded several episodes of the original and incorporated new material, grafted many local legends into the main body and transformed the spirit of an ancient heroic poem to achieve a new emotional intensity.

The apotheosis of the epic characters in the medieval period presents a sharp contrast to the attempts of identifying the epic heroes with the patrons of the poets adhering to the classical traditions. Pampa identified Arikesari, a Chalukya king, with Arjuna in his *Vikramārjunavijayam*, or Ponna identified the Rashtrakuta king, Krishna II with Rāma in his *Bhuvanaikarāmābhyudaya*. Sundhyakara Nandi, a court poet of Rampal, constructed his *Rāmacarita* in such a manner that it could be read as the story of the epic hero Rāma as well as of his patron. The medieval poet, in his anxiousness to be with the people, found that the apotheosis of Rāma was a much better way than to present him as a mortal king. The idea of incarnation was, of course, a part of popular religion and the presentation of Rāma as an incarnation of God fulfilled the emotional need of the people for a personal God as well. Moreover, the apotheosis did not prevent the poets from presenting Rāma in a familiar human situation and from subjecting him to human failings and sufferings. The eulogy of Rāma as the ideal king was also a concealed attempt to criticize the despots who were often a part of the contemporary experience.

Some of these poets used the new epical genres to defend the Brahmanical order. Tulsi, for example, defended and justified all actions of Rāma, some of which were certainly objectionable by any ethical standard. In fact his ill-famous couplet : “*ḍhol gāwar sūdra paśu nāri / sakala tāḍaṇa ke adhikāri*”—which upholds the existing inequality, and his occasional misogynic expressions, his great poetic power notwithstanding, makes his poem conspicuous as a manifesto of authoritarian Brahmanism. However, such features of these poems should not make one oblivious of their social role, and one should not dismiss them straightaway as a literature against peoples’ legitimate questions about the existing social order.

The most important thing that was achieved through these adaptations and translations was narrowing the gap between the educated elite and non-literate mass. The people welcomed these poems not simply because of their ethical content—that was undoubtedly important and people could derive certain norms of social behaviour—but primarily for their beauty and vigour and variety. They recognized in the archetypes presented in these narrations people around them, and their relevance to understanding contemporary social reality. That explains why this literature exerted a tremendous influence on the people not only in their literary activities but on the social and moral activities as well. And this was precisely the intention of the medieval poet. All other things proved to be of little consequences.

Before we talk about the other streams of medieval Indian literature, a few words must be said about a socio-religious phenomenon which distinguished the medieval period. It was the emergence of a new religious emotion—*bhakti*, generally translated as ‘devotion’. It was a passionate upsurge of emotional longing for a personal god leading to a total resignation. Scholars have tried to explain its sudden emergence all over the country by relating it to the advent of Islam in India, and more often to the oppression of the established religions over the common man. Such attempts explain the phenomenon only partially. *Bhakti* emerged in certain parts of the country long before the advent of Islamic mysticism on the Indian soil. It cannot be explained as a way of escape from the reality either for the Hindus who developed, according to some scholars, a sense of defeatism soon after the rise of Muslim power in India. *Bhakti* was always an

essential component in the popular religions, it disregarded all kinds of intellectualism and rigours of rituals and elaborations of dogmas. It emerged as a religion of protest against the authoritarian and institutionalized religions, against scholasticism and priestly authority supported by the ruling power. It advocated the worship of a personal god as against the transcendental. The personal god fulfilled the emotional need of the people as he represented the cosmic power and yet appeared in a familiar form and familiar situations, as a friend, as a child, as a mother and also as a lover. Bhakti was an instrument to humanize a god and to relate him to all possible human situations.

It is not a coincidence that a large number of medieval poets were devotees and saints, and almost all the saints of that period were either poets or lovers of poetry. The saints who revolted against the established religions often used poetry as a medium of their communication and the poets invariably welcomed *bhakti* as a medium also of their communication. Some of the poet-saints came from the higher strata of society but a larger number from the lower. The factor that united them was *bhakti*.

A popular literature, in the sense I have defined it, grew in two ways. Some scholars and poets created a literature for the people which is represented in the translations and transcreations and thus maintained its affiliations with certain traditions of the past. The other way in which this literature grew was developed by the people themselves. A popular literature cannot thrive on the patronage alone of those who do not belong to the masses. It must have a popular support as well so that it can develop from within. The patronage available to the medieval poet often created a tension between his conviction and the demands of his patron. There is a legend that the fifteenth century Telugu poet, Bummera Potana, who translated the *Bhāgavata*, was asked by his patron, a king, to dedicate the work to him. He did not obey the king, instead he wrote a verse denouncing him and dedicating the work to God, the King of kings. The authenticity of this verse has been questioned by scholars, but the fact remains that this verse is an indication (whoever might have written it) of a tension common among medieval poets working under royal patronage. Similarly the twelve century Kannada poet Hariharu, who once enjoyed patronage of a Hoysala king, left the court and

preferred living in a temple at Hampai. In one of his verses he says :

If the king says, 'Go away', one has to obey him.
 If the king says, 'Come', one has to present himself
 before him and to wait for his order.
 If the king says, 'shut up', one has to keep quiet,
 his legs trembling and his head bent--
 From these ignominies of life
 I have freed myself for your favour
 Oh, the King of Hampai, Siva.

This verse again is an indication of the critical attitude prevalent among the poets to the existing system of patronage. The poet had to make a choice, whether to serve a mortal king of a particular place and only of a particular time, or to serve the king who is immortal and all pervasive. In a verse

kabīr kutā rāmka mutipā merā nāu
 galai rāmki jewadī jīt khāice tit jāu
 (Kabir is Ram's dog, Mutiya is my name
 Chain of Ram is around my neck, to whichever
 direction am I pulled, I go)

Kabir touches this problem of patronage through the image of a loyal dog. He makes a choice between the earthly king and Rāma. The moment the poet discards the royal patronage, he looks towards temples or religious groups, and eventually to the people for an alternative.

I am not suggesting that patronage of the kings and landlords was necessarily rejected by all poets. On the contrary, a considerable part of medieval poetry was produced under their patronage. But whenever the poets rejected the royal patronage they were sustained by the people's patronage. And the majority of saint-poets preferred the latter.

Medieval poetry, apart from the narrative, presents a wide variety of short verse forms, some didactic, some prayers and hymns, some exposition of religious doctrines and some intensely lyrical. Almost all of them were associated with organized movements of the people protesting against the established religious traditions. Either they originated as a part of the movement initiated by different religious organizations or individual saints,

or they became a part of the literature sanctioned by them. The poet had two alternatives : either to find a landlord who would support him or to join a religious group. Each of these groups, whether the Alvars and the Nayanmars of Tamilnadu or the Virasaivas of Karnataka, or the followers of Chaitanya in Bengal, of Guru Nanak and Kabir in north India or the *barakaris* of Maharashtra, produced, or helped the growth, of a literature which was primarily an instrument of the propagation of their ideals as well as an attempt to create new myths and symbols. The literature that flourished under the inspiration of these religious groups was by and large a literature of the people and to some extent by the people. Many of the poets and saints belonged to the lower strata of society and experimented with the themes and forms and metrical structures that existed in oral literature. The metaphors and imagery employed by them came directly from their occupational experience as well as from the real-life situations which created a sharp contrast with the poetic conventions inherited from the Sanskrit traditions. Among the poet-saints one notices the presence of Ravidas, a cobbler ; Kabir, a weaver ; Sena, a barber ; Namadev, a tailor ; Sadna, a butcher ; Dadu, a carder. The Virasaivas included people from various professions and callings—barbers, washermen, weavers, performers, basket-makers and even a prostitute. So did almost all the religious sects. It is but natural that poets representing such different professions would change the texture of poetry and present an entirely new experience.

Medieval literature, then, was evolved out of two distinct processes : one, the process of vernacularization manifested in the translations and adaptations of Sanskrit epics and commentaries on religious texts ; two, a process of 'super-ordination' by which I mean, giving a new prestige to the existing themes, structures and forms current among the people in different regions.

The poet had to operate within a religious framework because that gave him maximum freedom and opportunity to express their own social concerns and to experiment with the literary medium. If the religious leaders used literature as an instrument of propagation of their ideas, the poets too used religion as an instrument of propagation of literature. Since most of the poets were also

easily resolved. It did create a tension only when the poet was not a religious man. The poet, however, willingly accepted a religious framework, as he found it flexible enough to accommodate all his concerns, social, moral as well as personal, without making a fetish of distinguishing between the sacred and the secular. The two streams of bhakti, *nirguna* (without qualities) and *saguna* (with qualities), provided two different frameworks for poetry. The *saguna* framework allowed the poet to deal with the god-man relation within a domestic environment and with love in all its manifestations: friendship, filial affection and devotion, and amorousness. The *nirguna* framework, on the other hand, gave a greater scope to dealing with the immediate social concerns. While the former developed an elaborate mythology of divine sports (*līlā*) in human terms, the latter concentrated on the sufferings of the people caused by social injustice and religious evils. This is undoubtedly a simplified description of a complex situation, and strictly from the literary point of view the two frameworks often overlapped. But it is sufficient to point out that the religious framework of medieval poetry provided an ample measure of freedom to individual creativity and a greater opportunity of communication. Instead of encouraging an escapist literature, restricted to a few, it ensured a greater participation of the people.

III

In a society divided into a literate and a non-literate group, a written literature is necessarily confined to the former. Medieval Indian literature, I repeat, was created for the people, but it was primarily a written literature. In order to resolve this contradiction the poets adopted an oral medium as its mode of transmission. Not only did the poets themselves recite and chant their poems, but a class of performers emerged all over the country who made the written literature available to the non-literate audiences. They hardly cared for the purity of the verbal art, took help from the other arts, music and dance, and often dramatic techniques. Or in other words, they did not depend on the pure modes of communication, the written or the spoken word, but on what Marshall McLuhan calls, the hybridization of media. The practice of reading

of medieval India. The ancient Indian poets also read out their verses, as did the Greeks and the Romans. But they read before a chosen group. Erich Auerbach has shown admirably how the literary public of Rome lost its contact with the lower classes and failed to survive. The medieval Indian poet realized that a literature must be in constant touch with the living language of the people and it must be continuously related with the changing experience of the people. This is one of the reasons why his texts are so much disputed and interpolations in them are so much common. Each text has its own history and the history of the medieval literary texts bears the testimony of changes in them caused by the poets and the performers to suit the need of the people.

Along with the modes of oral transmission adopted by the poets, one must also consider the role of seasonal festivals and fairs in the life of the non-literate masses and how the poets took advantage of those. It was the desire on the part of the saint-poets to maintain a constant touch with the people that prompted them to participate in different festivals and to visit places. The Alvars and the Nayanmars would move from temple to temple, so would the Barakaris of Maharashtra. The Virasaivas had their *Śivanubhava mandapa* where thousands of devotees would meet, Sunkaradeva introduced the *Namghar* (home of praise) and Chaitanya arranged the *nagar samkirtana* (religious processions) and Jagannath Das established *bhāgavata ṭungī* (places where the *Bhāgavata* is recited) in every village in Orissa. Songs could be sung in the temples as well as in the holy places specially created by the poets and the people. Long narrative poems could be read throughout the festival days. These were the devices made by the medieval poet with the help of the people. The religious framework, thus, was as much a necessity for the poet, as the artistic activities were to the religious leader.

The situation has a certain similarity with that of Protestant Europe during the Reformation which not only encouraged the best minds of Europe to write in vernaculars, but employed every form of art in the service of its propaganda. It encouraged the growth of a dramatic literature out of its liturgical and folkloristic origins, as did medieval India witness the growth of religious dramatic

against the caste system and idolatry and empty rituals by Kabir, Nanak, Basavanna, Vemana, Tukaram and Ramprasad, to name a few, can be favourably compared with the angry protests against the vendors of indulgence and false promises of security of salvation during the Reformation movement. The comparison, however, cannot be pushed further, nor is it necessary either. The Protestant movement upheld the importance of the Bible, the one and the only one text, to examine the validity of all religious dogmas. The medieval Indian saints had little faith in any particular text, and many of them found all texts useless. While Luther and his followers aroused the peasantry through fiery polemics and engaged in a series of theological debates, the medieval Indian poet had little interest in theological niceties, through theological rigours were imposed upon each sect later. The medieval poet-saint did organize the people to some extent, but certainly not to the extent of mobilizing them either against the ruling power or for a radical change in the social order. Except for the community of the Sikhs, which continued as a distinct group in the following centuries, most of the sects soon lost their potentiality. But I need not go into that story at present. What is important is the poet's partial success in creating a new awareness among the people. He challenged the apparent rationality of the causal relation between the idea of *karma* and the birth-cycle which gave the caste system its legitimacy. The doctrine of *kayakave Kailas* (work is God) of the Virasaivas gave a new dignity to all kinds of labour, and several saint-poets, Kabir, Nanak, Vemana and Tukaram in particular, repudiated the caste system in the strongest terms, upholding the natural equality of man. Without committing too much, one can say that the essence of bhakti literature is an Indian equivalent of European humanism. But this 'humanism' flourished within a religious framework. If that appears to be a contradiction in terms, one should ask oneself how a deeply religious Greek poet could declare, "There are many wonders in the world, but none is more wonderful than man", and whether we can dismiss Chandidas' utterances "Man is the highest and there is nothing higher than him" as a later interpolation?

IV

The story of the emergence and the consolidation of a popular literature in medieval India would remain incomplete without referring to its relation with the traditional literary conventions. Often in a study of literature in isolation to social reality the stress is laid mainly, if not entirely, on the content with an expectation to find direct correspondence between the two, and the form is neglected as something arbitrary or of little consequence. But literary form, very much like the content, is related to the complex creative process and takes a concrete shape through the interactions between the artist and the world to which he belongs. His choice of the linguistic material and the concretization of his expression through a particular structure is often determined by extra-literary facts, though it is not easy to describe their relations. Sociological criticism can be useful in understanding the nature of an artistic work only when it treats the work not merely as a quarry of useful data about a particular society, but as a distinct human activity.

The very employment of vernaculars rejecting Sanskrit, for example, was a necessity for the medieval poet. It was necessary not only because it provided the closest approximation to the people, a necessary condition for the growth of a popular literature, but also because it proved to be the adequate medium for his emotion. Sanskrit was still in use in the medieval period and a substantial amount of literature was still written in that language. But the vernaculars opened a new possibility. Sanskrit, being nobody's mother tongue, an imposed language of education and communication among the elite, was very much like English in modern India. Moreover, it lacked symbols and imagery, as pointed out by D.H. Ingalls, derived from the impressions of childhood or emotions which form our characters in early childhood. It was divorced from an area of life whence poetry derives much of its strength. It became possible for the medieval poet to create a poetry which incorporated imagery and metaphors derived from the experiences of childhood and adolescence on the one hand, and of the domestic surroundings and the daily activities of the artisans and labourers and of various occupational groups. Almost no studies have been done in this area. To give an instance, even a cursory glance at the *Sakhis* of Kabir would show that along with the traditional metaphors and symbols of trees

and rivers and birds, appeared a distinctly new set of metaphors and imagery, all derived from familiar situations and experiences. It is a world distinguished by vividness and naturalness, created through the experiences of daily life : a market-place where cheats and pimps thrive, a dilapidated temple, a potter at work, a blacksmith busy with his tools, an oilman grinding seeds, a kazi killing an animal, a dog loafing around, a falcon swooping upon a bird, and so on. These are the materials with which the medieval poet created a world of his own. This world may or may not attract the modern man, but its uniqueness can be understood only in its own terms. The language he used, the conventions and devices he adopted, the metres and forms he employed are the necessary constituents of the world he created. A mere analysis of the content would not reveal the intensity of his experience and the complexities of his expression. The popular literature that was created by him had both.

The greatest singular achievement of the medieval Indian poet was the creation of a lyric form, which places the poet at the centre of the structure, but does not alienate him from the community. Indian religious traditions plead very strongly for the annihilation of ego and for total surrender of man to the authority of God. The medieval religious tradition did not oppose them. Religious poetry under such a situation would naturally strive for anonymity rather than pronounced individuality. But the poet's name or some kind of identification mark became an integral part of the medieval religious poems, and the poets made autobiographical references quite often. These references were made not in the form of historical facts, barring a few cases, but generally in the form of personal experiences and conflicts. In some cases they were uttered through a persona but in many cases directly in the person of the poet himself. And this made these poems truly popular. It accommodated the experience of the individual—his total experience of life—dedicated to God. There remained nothing in life which could not find a place in this structure. Even if you are against the very scheme of things this structure allows scope for its full ventilation. Take for example these two quotations, one from Tukaram and the other from Ramprasad.

Well done, O God, I became bankrupt
 Well done, the famine torments me
 Well done, I am dishonoured today
 Well done, I have lost my cattle and the little that I had

... Tuka says, this vow of *ékādaśī* is good
I can keep myself awake all the night in an empty stomach.

I shall not call you mother any longer
I had enough of humiliations.
Desperate as I was, I cried and cried
'Mother'
But all my prayers fell on your deaf ears.
The child suffers on the very presence of his mother.
Why then, should he call you
Mother ?
What a paradox
Says Ramprasad,
Mother against son !
Now I will see
What more you can do
What more suffering
Can you inflict upon me
except
an empty stomach.

The poet is expressing a personal experience which is not different from the collective experience. The individuality of the expression gives it the distinction of a lyric, and the connection of the experience of the individual to that of the people makes it a part of the popular literature as conceived by the medieval Indian poet.

I am grateful to Sri T.S. Sutyannath for his active help and criticism, and to Professor Prem Singh for his comments during the preparation of this paper.

THE GEOMETRY OF PAIN
ON THE DISCONTINUOUS AND FRAGMENTARY STRUCTURES OF
THE GOTHIC NOVEL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
JAMES HOGG, MATURIN AND MRS RADCLIFFE

Alok Bhalla

Gothic novels are often constructed out of a series of fragmentary tales of agony and decay told by a variety of narrators. In their narrative structures Gothic novels do not always replicate the spatial order, or the linear coherence, or the rational composure of works built on Aristotelian principles of unity. Of course, the fragmentariness and the structural discontinuity of Gothic novels has often been noticed, though not always with approval, by a number of critics. However, their analyses of the fragmented and grotesquely ruptured structural patterns of Gothic novels are neither adequate nor convincing. This is because in their accounts of the formal properties of Gothic novels they fail or refuse to recognize that Gothic structures are adequate modes of rendering the Self's experience of loss of a centrally organizing moral or spiritual purpose, of division and suffering, at a specific moment of crisis within a culture. Instead of concerning themselves with spiritual urgencies and the historical necessities which justify the constructions of Gothic fragments or of discontinuous narrative patterns, they settle for a method of analysis which is either merely classificatory and descriptive or, in its concern with the morphology of the Gothic tale, totally devoid of history and the suffering subject.

Most recent critics concerned with the formal properties that make up the Gothic novel begin with the assumption that the Gothic novel is primarily a fabrication without any vital concern for the material conditions of human beings within a concretely defined civil society. For them the Gothic novel is a crafted, but inessential, nightmare each element of which can be isolated, classified and rearranged to construct a new nightmare. They look upon the Gothic novel as an opaque object assembled like any strange cryptogram out of ornamental, though spectral, signs and images. Obviously, then, these critics are concerned not with discovering the organizing insight informing the moral and social vision of the Gothic novel, but with decoding the internal relations of the signs and images with the help of which the novel is structured. However

useful such an approach may be, the Gothic structure thus studied reveals itself to be nothing more than a mechanical ensemble of lurid colours, malignant ghosts, Inquisitional crypts, vampires, mysterious bells etc, with each image, each sign, signifying nothing beyond itself. Free from the burden of social memories, historical references and the particular human condition of the author himself, the luxurious variety of signs and images in the Gothic novel combine to form a predictable structure which is not rooted in or expressive of any affective and material processes of history. Thus, the Gothic novel emptied of historical time and not implicated with the suffering Self, becomes a purely formal and autonomous construct. These methods of analysis of structure reduce the Gothic novel to a harmless fabrication without any human ground and without any historical reason.

The earliest attacks on the structural inadequacies of the Gothic novel were made, as one should expect, by the neo-classical critics of the 18th century. The Gothic novel did not satisfy their norms of 'taste' and of 'reason' because it violated permanently given structural models. The neo-classical critics insisted that the aesthetic pleasure (and consequently moral value) afforded by a novel, or by any other work of art, was primarily a result of recognizing in its structural pattern a conscious imitation of the rationalized models of nature and of society. Concerned with discovering in the novel stability, ordered continuity and clarity of images fixed within a rationally cultivated structure, the neo-classical critics found that the Gothic novel violated their structural, and hence their moral, expectations.¹

One can locate the disaffection of Enlightenment critics with the structure of the Gothic novel within the historical and social experiences of the 18th century and find therein a philosophic and aesthetic justification for their criticism. In contrast to them, however, modern critics of Gothic structures are not always concerned with the relation between the form of the Gothic novel and socio-historical urgencies. Instead, some critics like Dorothy Scarborough, Edith Birkhead, Eino Railo, Montague Summers and Peter Penzoldt are concerned mainly with cataloguing the different kinds of supernatural or weird creatures who participate in the action, or the different ways in which authors manipulate theatrical properties to

Sklovskij, Tzvetan Todorov, Eric S. Rabkin and Marianne Thalmann, all in their different ways inspired by Vladimir Propp's classic book *Morphology of the Folktale*, are engaged in isolating those special formal properties (e.g. function of characters, sequence of events, arrangements of images or the expectations of the reader) of the novel that go towards the making of that separate genre known as the Gothic tale.

At times the former set of critics are so preoccupied with the codification of all the known variants of the characters and properties that appear in any Gothic novel that they seem to have no other critical expectations than that of an antiquarian convinced that the very antiquity of the objects makes them worth our attention. Thus, Scarborough² and Birkhead³ classify the ghosts, demons and witches that terrorize the Gothic space and thrill the reader into sleeplessness; and Penzoldt adds to their classification some more monsters and evil creeds.⁴ To the classification of supernatural beings Eino Railo adds a list of the stage properties—the mouldering ivy-covered walls, the mossy towers, the “awesome silence” of subterranean vaults, shady grottos, magic mirrors and forests shrouded by the murky light of the moon.⁵ Neither of these critics realize that the paraphernalia of the Gothic novel they so assiduously categorize is fascinating because it is informed with purposiveness and it makes tangible the known and the irrational, the auspicious and the inauspicious powers that often determine the fate of human beings and give shape to the natural and the social world they inhabit. Their indiscriminate effort to retrieve from oblivion every Gothic ghost and grated dungeon converts literary discourse into a ‘sad’ science of accumulation.⁶ Their historicism minimizes the concerns of the Gothic novelists with real life processes.

The latter set of critics concerned with the structure of the Gothic novel, on the other hand, concentrate on making an historical study of the transformation of structures and images in order to postulate a ‘pure’ model of the Gothic which can endure independently of the subjectivity of the authors and beyond the disconcerting temporality of the world of human event. Following the methodology of Propp,⁷ they set themselves the task of discovering those invariable units, independent of cultural and social meanings, that make up the structure of any work which can be classified as

Gothic. They show that though Gothic novels have an excess of characters and a wilderness of events, yet they have a few limited and classifiable formal properties which are amazingly uniform and repetitious and out of which can be constructed a model of the 'pure' Gothic.

Thus, for the Russian formalist Viktor Sklovskij, the 'pure' Gothic is, like any traditional riddle, put together in such a way that each sign in it, at least at first, traps the reader into accepting a false or an "obscene solution"⁸ to the mystery. Concerned, like the linguists, with the science of internal relations, in which each sign is untouched by socio-cultural motivation and does not participate in the temporal process, his analysis of the structural mechanism of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* exposes it as an 'unpure' object.⁹ The Gothic novel devoid of history and the problematic of the Self is, thus, reduced to a coded object without sensuality; for, since its system of internal relations can be made objectively comprehensible and always be repeated, the pleasure of reading is transformed into a technique of cataloguing. The Gothic novel becomes like Peter Schlemihl, a thing without a shadow, doomed to sterility because it is totally revealed.

In a similar spirit, though far more sophisticated, is the formalist analysis offered by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Fantastic : A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*.¹⁰ Todorov finds the definitions of the fantastic tale by H.P. Lovecraft, Roger Caillois and Peter Penzoldt unacceptable because they depend too much upon the *sangfroid* of its reader.¹¹ He sets up a 'pure' structural model of the Gothic which will be purged of the disturbing problem posed either by the shifting historical context in which a work is written or the subjective response of a reader to a literary text. He begins by defining the 'pure' fantastic tale as that which leaves the reader hesitating till the very end of the adventure between a rational or a supernatural explanation of the weird events. For him the fantastic "occupies the duration of this uncertainty"¹². If the reader (guided often by the main character) decides that the events have a rational explanation, then the fantastic dissolves and we are left with a new genre—the uncanny tale. If, however, he accepts the power of the supernatural, the fantastic enters the region of yet another genre—the marvellous tale. According to Todorov, the Gothic belongs to the latter two classifications.¹³ In the Gothic novel, four

is either resolved by rational explanations or is transformed into wonder. For Todorov, then, the Gothic is not a particular form emerging out of a specific historical period, nor is it concerned with the Self's search for authentic values, but is merely an interesting "combinational system"¹⁴, a rhetorical device for organizing images and signs into astonishing patterns. At this point one must, of course, wonder at what point in historical time does the critic intervene in order to select texts from whose impure structures he can abstract an ideal model.¹⁵ And since this intervention is by necessity arbitrary, one is forced to raise questions about the private needs of the critic which lead him to make those particular choices.¹⁶ Thus, once more one is forced to confront the problem of the relation between the structure of the Gothic novel and the Self involved in temporality.

Perhaps the most brilliant and imaginative of the recent¹⁷ analysis of the structural arrangements of the Gothic novel is offered by Marianne Thalmann in *The Literary Sign Language of German Romanticism*. However, her critical methodology is once again spatial and taxonomic without the special emphasis in the Gothic or romantic tale on the particular condition of the experiencing subject who is so often lost in the wilderness of the temporal world. For her any Romantic tale is an architectural fabrication which assumes significance primarily as a structural arrangement of value-free elements. The fantastic is only a construction out of hieroglyphic signs which have no meaningful relation to the passions and perversities of real experiences or to social and moral necessities. The romantic poet is like Daedalus, the secular craftsman of labyrinths, who fabricates worlds of ornamental dreams that reflect some "inner fantasia" (Novalis) so as to avoid the infections of those philistine desires that give shape to the modern city.¹⁸ Thalmann insists that the fantastic constructs by the romantic artists are totally abstracted from the dull, grey world of everyday life; they are aesthetic designs crafted out of a profusion of strangely coloured objects and exotic beings that do not exist and hence cannot moulder or die as things and creatures of time. The Romantic artist, she says, is an occultist of signs, a magnificent artificer of mythical paradises where the unrest of the city is always stilled into a prismatic order.

Once again, in the formalist analysis the fantastic or the Gothic turns out to be nothing more than a nostalgia for some crafted

mythic or pastoral space remote from that world where the living must perpetually wage "contention with their time's decay"¹⁹. This conclusion is indeed startling since Gothic novels, like Romantic poems, are critiques of any mythic or pastoral fabrication which does not bear witness to the experiential world in which men participate and through which alone they can realize the fullness of their creative potential.²⁰

The problem with the formalist analysis discussed so far is that once the critic has, in his quest for logically ideal models, isolated and defined the spatial structures of the fantastic and identified all the parts that go into its making there is no mystery left. The architectural metaphor brings to our consciousness those items which are known already and the relations between which are fixed and determined. We are given with fixed meanings without any hints that there is a residue of the unknown which, as L.C. Knights correctly asserts, perpetually interacts with and modifies our apprehension of a given text.²¹ The 'irrationality' of the tales, instead of being shaped by historical peculiarities and testifying to the specific existential concerns unique to the times, becomes a means of affirming 'rational' coherence which either subsists prior to or can be abstracted from the wilderness of events that constitute the world in which we live. The formalist critics, refusing the intervention of any historical meanings in their static models, fail to acknowledge that the demonic cosmology that makes up the Gothic novel was a scandal precisely because, like witchcraft and magic in Tudor and Stuart England, its very presence contradicted the rationalist assumptions that formed the basis of the economic and moral law, the religious and political practice, of the age of Enlightenment.²² The formalist method is unsatisfactory because it abolishes the concerns of the Gothicists, similar to those of the Romantics, with this historical or profane world of "evanescent duration"²³—what Mrs Radcliffe in *The Italian* calls "the region of time and of suffering" (p. 31)—within which the Self is situated and through which alone can it recover, with the aid of its imaginative powers, its identity with the original plenitude of Being. Like the Romantic poem, the Gothic novel reflects in its structure and the relationship of its parts an agonizing consciousness of the condition of "transcendental homelessness"²⁴ of the Self mocking social and religious valorization within the discontinuity and fragmentariness of the spectacle of history.

The structure of the Gothic novel, therefore, requires a mode of analysis which is historical and processual (not in any progressive linear sense, but one which takes into account chance, disruption or discontinuity) and which can preserve subjectivity, instead of one which is spatial and mechanic.²⁵ For the Gothic novel, made up as it is of fragmentary stories of shifting narrators whose particular chronologies intersect quite arbitrarily to create tortuous labyrinths, of half-heard whispers that carry hints of identity, of distorted shapes seen in the mountain-mist that the Self recognizes as its demonic shadow, of confessions and past humiliations recorded in mouldering manuscripts only partially decipherable, of exclamations and sighs that intensify mystery, of objects that are at once real and demonic, will not permit imprisonment within any 'pure' structures. Instead, the Gothic novelist employs various aesthetic strategies which consistently violate prefabricated models to deal with the problem of history and of the Self "chained to Time"²⁶ and tormented by the ambiguities of its engagement in the phenomenal world.

On the one hand, the structure of the Gothic novel is sometimes fragmentary.²⁷ Oftentimes, through the actions of the Gothic novel the Self neither discovers a sufficient explanation for the agonies of the human condition which can validate moral or natural law based on reason, nor rediscovers ontological security by apprehending the presence of a transcendental principle. Unable to affirm the existence of a coherent social order or to achieve epiphany, the Gothic novel suddenly breaks off the chronological narrative and ends, like many a Romantic fragment dealing with failed quests and loss of imaginative vision (e.g. Shelley's "The Triumph of life", Keats's "The Fall of Hyperion"), on a note of utter dejection. We are left with a series of instances of anguish and decay, forbidding any kind of optimism of finding a way out of a world of "terror, madness, crime, remorse"²⁸. One can say that the Gothic fragment is simultaneously a record of the Self becoming aware of the futility of its quest for authenticity and an analogue of the divisiveness and fragmentariness of the social and economic conditions of the times. On the other hand, the narrative movement of the Gothic novel is sometimes interrupted by the intrusion of the strange (often concretized in the shapes of the Wandering Jew, vampires, bleeding corpses, bandits, vicious judges and malevolent landlords, brutal nuns and

Inquisitional priests), which defines rational explanation and, which yet, perplexes the imagination and perversely influences human action in the world of profane duration. Thus, through its structural discontinuities and the grotesquery of its formal parts, the Gothic novel locates itself in the "dereliction and dismay"²⁹ of the historical moment. And, at the same time, the fragmented structural patterns of the novel give shape to the agonies of the Self whose pilgrimage for immortality and imaginative freedom is, like the quest of Keats's "death-pale" knight or Shelley's Ahasuerus, so often baffled into the demonic world of unending generation, unending decay, where

Evening must usher night, night must urge morrow, month follow month
with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.³⁰

The 'irrationalism' or the apparent disorder of the Gothic novel does not permit the kind of cold, formal analysis of those structuralist critics who deny its rootedness in the process of history and its concern with the problematic Self engaged in the real world. The Gothic structure, however fragmented or discontinuous it may be, is an act of imaginative 'making' which questions and contradicts the confidence of the Augustans in the lucidity of Reason alone to create a harmonious world in which human beings can feel themselves at home.³¹ Thus, the structural patterns of Gothic novels, with all their spatial and temporal disruptions and discontinuities, are a part of the creative need of the novelists to render into an appropriate form human conduct and torments at a specific moment of crisis in a culture. By their refusal to duplicate given structural models of 18th century aesthetics and in so doing denying the legitimacy of the ethical, political and social values of the Augustan gentlemen, the Gothic novelists reveal their consciousness of the historical and spiritual concerns of the age. The discontinuous or the fragmentary Gothic novel is a viable mode of discourse. In the realm of socio-historical experience the structure of the Gothic novel expresses a world of division and suffering, a world without any centrally organizing moral or political aims. In its concern with ontology, structural fragmentation gives shape to the anxiety of the Self which is both unable to reactualize, as the primitive man could, the cosmogonic time of marvels, and painfully aware that unlike the religious person or the visionary poet,³² it cannot redeem profane times and achieve identity with Being. An analysis of the narrative

properties of a few of the more structurally adventurous Gothic novels should make it clear that their forms effectively and adequately concretize the concerns of the novelists with historical processes and with ontology.

For the purposes of a detailed examination of the structure of the Gothic novel I shall first concentrate on James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. One may object that *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* is not a typical Gothic romance, but is rather an extension of the form incorporating in its narrative frame some additional, though related, elements like the *Doppelgänger* motif. However, the novel has often been considered, along with such atypical works as *Frankenstein* and *Vathek*, as belonging quite appropriately to the Gothic tradition by such a diverse variety of critics as André Gide, Devendra Varma, Robert Kiely, David Daiches and David Craig. After all, Hogg in writing his novel was influenced by *Melmoth the Wanderer*, and in turn his novel did have later on in the century, quite an effect on the narrative and thematic elements of the works by Emily Brontë, R.L. Stevenson and others. Hogg's *Confessions* may not have any ruined castles or any sin-tainted ghosts in chains, but in its ghastly effect at least it is as finely and as terrifyingly realized as many a Gothic novel. Far removed from the world of the ordinary mimetic novel, filled with preternatural hauntings, it does articulate through its narrative structure, as clearly as any other Gothic romance, modes of being in a community without any informing rationality or creative purpose.

The writer of the only contemporary review of James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) thought that the structure of the tale, though original, was very clumsy and disconcerting. Hogg's narrative method, according to the reviewer, did not permit the development of George Colwan, the one character in the novel capable of dispelling mystery and giving a reasoned account of the events recorded.⁸⁹ From the point of view of neo-classical aesthetic demands and expectations this criticism of the novel's structure is valid. But the criticism fails to comprehend the significance of Hogg's conscious derangement of traditionally accepted narrative structures which have order and unity because they are controlled by narrators secure in their capacity to perceive in the world the operation of laws of Reason. The novel

is discomforting partly because the events are simultaneously real and supernatural, historical and dreaming madness, true and false. And partly because each of the different narrators used is uncertain about his perceptions of the events which he either participates in, witnesses or describes. Our discomfort is made more acute by our knowledge that some of the story's narrators, like Lockhart, William Laidlaw and James Hogg himself, have identities outside the novel's framework; we are simultaneously aware of them as historical persons and as fictional presences. Quite evidently, then, the novel is so structured as to convince us of an irrecoverable loss of unity between the Self and the external world; it is designed to suggest conditions in which the social and natural worlds appear to be totally hostile and alien to the Self and so transform into a nightmare the Self's dream of creative fullness.³⁴ The discontinuous design of the novel gives an adequate sense of the agony of a soul recording at the very edge of madness those psychological and historical conditions that have marked its inexorable "pilgrimage" (CJS, p. 235) towards damnation and the "darksome waste" (CJS, p. 221) of Hell.

Confessions of a Justified Sinner is told from a variety of points of view. Each narrative voice recounts the same set of events but creates out of them a different temporal and spatial order and discovers in them a different kind of meaning. The different narrators are, however, uncertain about their perceptions, their memories and even about the actuality of events. They doubt the accuracy of their version, the sincerity of other narrators and sometimes their own sanity. Each narrator repeats, and often contradicts, events described by others but varies them to incorporate his own specific preoccupations with the Self at the particular social or historical instance of the narration. Without any authentic narrative Self to give to the events described clarity and continuity, we are left within a spectral maze of shifting definitions and interpretations, and often in our despair over finding a definite meaning or purpose, we wish we could give up all the disturbing questions about history or the Self which are raised in the novel.

The narrative structure of the novel is divided into three major parts. The first and the third parts consist of the "Editor's Narrative", and the second part is made up of the transcript of the published memoir and diary notes of Robert Wringhim concerning

the events that took place in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The three sections are in themselves further sub-divided, containing different tales or versions of the main events. The third part is composed, in part, of a letter about the life of a man who committed suicide (presumably Robert Wringhim) written by James Hogg, a shepherd, to the *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1823. The second part, containing Robert's own version of his life, is in part cast in the form of a "religious parable such as the pilgrim's progress" (*CJS*, p. 221) and, is in part a record in diary form of the last days of Robert's life. It also contains a longish tale borrowed from folk history about the people of Auchtermuchty told to Robert by a Cameronian servant Samuel Scrape, who in turn heard it from an old woman named Lucky Shaw. The first part is not at all a factual narrative as some critics have asserted, but is constructed by the Editor from folk traditions about the hauntings of Robert Wringhim and from the factual information to be found in parish registers. Therefore, the novel is not as neatly divided into the following parts suggested by Marius Bewley: the factual or the objective narrative told by an unbiased and empirical editor who has James Hogg's approval, and the subjective and private narrative of the man in torment viewing the world through his "diseased" mind.³⁶ Nor does the divided form of the novel concretize in its parts, as suggested by Douglas Gifford, the clear and sharp distinction between the old surviving dogmas of religion and faith and the new forces of scientific rationalism and material advance that were beginning to be manifest in the Scottish society following the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Union of 1707.³⁶

Hogg's novel is so structured that it does not permit one to say with any certainty that his sympathies lie whole-heartedly with the progressive forces of new science against the "rebellion and gloomy wastes"³⁷ of Scottish religious sectarianism. Instead, Hogg's structural and narrative method reveals a much more complex feeling for the ambivalences of lived experiences at specific moments of historical and national change. Each set of narratives in the novel unfolds a uniquely different set of perceptions of the religious and material conditions that shape the lives of the characters involved. The narrative method does not permit affirmation of any single point of view and leaves us with moments of discontinuity from each of which we can hope for nothing more than provisional

intelligibility.³⁸ Hogg's narrators are too involved in the spectacle of the moment, too preoccupied with their own religious, economic or historical concerns, too mired in their own passions, to give us an account of the events which is dispassionate, unambiguous and empirically verifiable. Like the Romantic poets, Hogg is ominously aware of the fact that "there are strange things, and unaccountable agencies in nature" (*CJS*, p. 138), in society and in the human psyche that can disrupt the most human and rationally planned schemes. Indeed, one could assert that Hogg shares, as a counter to all rationalist proposals, the vision of the world which is open to perpetual demonic enchantment offered by Lucky Shaw, a poor peasant woman who embodies the consciousness of all those who endure rather precariously in a world of material and religious strife.³⁹ Lucky Shaw after completing her tale of the people of Auchtermuchty gives the following summary of folk philosophy of history :

"Now this is a true story, my man," quo the auld wile, "an' whenever you are doubtfu' of a man, take auld Robin Ruthven's plan, an' look for the cloven foot, for it's a thing that winna hide ; an' it appears whiles where one wadna think o't. It will keek out frae aneath the parson's gown, the lawyer's wig, and the Cameronian's blue bannet ... " (*CJS*, p. 203)

The form of *Confessions*, in its fragmentariness and lack of empirical certainty, articulates Lucky Shaw's sense of evanescence and her awareness of the ever-present possibility of the disintegration of the Self and of human society into demonic waste.

The "Editor" of the first and third parts of the novel is a 19th century Scottish gentleman and merchant. He is a Tory in his politics, and, as an old college friend of Lockhart's, has social connections with the Land-owning gentry—"those damned middle-class Lockharts" as D.H. Lawrence called them while praising Burns.⁴⁰ An urban bourgeois, he is a member of those new class alliances that came into being as a result of the material, commercial and industrial forces that had begun to dominate both Scotland and England at the end of the 17th century. Brought up in the tradition of 18th century scepticism, his interest in the local traditions about Robert Wringhim and his suicide is that of an antiquarian occupying his leisure hours with "some myatery that mankind diuna ken nuething about yet" (*CJS*,

p. 253). One suspects that his interest in the story is not a result of a human concern with understanding the conflicts and passions out of which the present moment emerged. Rather, from the security of his position he wants to assert the greater "rationality" of the social and economic arrangements of the class of which he is a part, against the "irrationality" of the social order in Scotland before the Glorious Revolution of which the tale is an example.⁴¹ He cannot comprehend that for the poor agriculturists, to which category James Hogg the shepherd and writer of local history belongs, the story of religious enthusiasm, demonism, political fanaticism and economic greed, is important in a very real sense.⁴² For the urbane "Editor" Robert's history may be nothing more than a record of "dreaming or madness", or merely a curious "religious parable" told "on purpose to illustrate something scarcely tangible" (CJS, p. 254). But for Hogg and other shepherds it is an important part of the social and ethical history within which they can define themselves. The story may be fabulous, it may not yield any meaning when subjected to empirical investigation, but for the poor, living at the precarious margins of the more "rational" world, it offers consolation and a means of coming to terms with their condition.

The "Editor" fails to understand that the very persistence of the tale is not an example of the "irrationality" of the peasants, but of their lack of confidence in the moral, legal and economic order to which he belongs—the tale contradicts his rationalist confidence.⁴³ This is evident in the following moral drawn by Lucky Shaw from the tale about the people of Auchtermuchty. In contradistinction to the smug representation of the modern world as one of enlightened Reason by the "Editor", she uses the idiom of folklore and demonology to define the position of the poor in a society in which the only moral arbitrator they have is the Devil—his intervention, though dangerous, can "ensure that evil deeds do not go unpunished"⁴⁴. She tells Samuel Scrape, much to the approval of everyone present, that the Devil "rules an' works in the bairns of disobedience," and that

Gin ever he observes a proud professor, wha has mae than ordinary pretensions to a divine calling, and that reards and prays till the very howlets learn his preambles, *that's* the Auld Simmie fixes on to mak a dishclot o'. He canna get rest in hell, if he sees a man, or a set of men o' this stamp,

an' when he sets fairly to wark, it is seldom that he disna bring them round till his aim measures by hook or by crook. Then, O it is a grand prize for him, an' a proud deil he is, when he gangs hame to his ain ha', wi' a batch o' the souls o' sic strenuous professors on his back. Ay, I trow auld Ingleby, the Liverpool packman, never came up Glasco street wi' prouder pomp, when he had ten horse-lairs afore him o' Flanders lace, an' hollin lawn, an' silks an' satins frae the eastern Indians, the souls o' proud professors on his braid shoulders, Ha, ha, ha! I think I see how the auld thief wad be gaun through his gized dominions, crying his wares, in derision. 'Wha will buy a fresh, cauler [newly caught] divine, a bouzy bishop, a fasting zealot, or a piping priest? For a' their prayers an' their praises, their aumuses [amices] an' their penances, their whinings, their howlings, their rantings, an' their ravings, here they come at last! Behold the end! Here go the rare and precious wares! A fat professor for a bodle [two pence], an' a lean one for half a merk!' 'I declare, I [Samuel Scrape] trembled at the aud hag's ravings but the lave o' the Kimmers applauded the sayings as sacred truths.' An' then Lucky went on: "There are many wolves in sheep's clathing, among us, my man; mony deils aneath the masks o' zealous professors, roaming about in kirks and meeting-houses o' the land ..." (CJS, pp. 197-98)

The indictment of the social order to which the "Editor" belongs is clear. James Hogg, of course, has sympathy with this folk belief that in a society in which the poor have no legal safeguards against the arbitrary control of the propertied and landed gentry, the Devil's authority is all they have of asserting their social identity.⁴⁵ One cannot agree with David Craig's assertion that unlike the characters in Hardy, Hogg's peasants who speak Scots do not carry the 'moral' weight of the story.⁴⁶

It is quite understandable why the "Editor" does not represent Hogg's own point of view. Hogg takes care to separate himself from the "Editor" who cannot realize that there exists an existential relation between the story of the suicide and the material condition of the peasants which hasn't changed substantially since the first English revolution. Like a majority of 18th century critics who failed to appreciate the powerful influence Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* had over the peasants,⁴⁷ the "Editor" cannot realize that Hogg and other peasants and shepherds interpret Robert's "perilous journey" (CJS, p. 183) towards damnation as a demonic mirror image of Christian pilgrimage. Their interpretation of Robert's life in terms of religious abomination and the idiom of witchcraft enables them to endure their human fate within an economic

and political structure which only satisfies the interests of the bourgeoisie ; in this social organization the Devil is sometimes the avenger of the weak. That is why Hogg, as a character in the novel, gently mocks the "Editor" when they first meet.

The "Editor", anxious to fill his leisure time, goes to meet Hogg, the shepherd, while the latter is on his way to the fair to sell his sheep. The social relations between the classes to which the two belong become quite clear when the "Editor" offers Hogg more money for his sheep than he can possibly get at the market, provided he takes him to the suicide's grave to examine its remains. Hogg spurns the offer and chides the "Editor" for his idle curiosity, saying : "Od bless ye, lad ! I hae ither matters to mind. I hae a' thae paulies to sell, an' then I hae ten scores o' yowes to buy after, an' if I canna first sell my ain stock, I canna buy nae ither body's. I hae mair ado than I can manage the day, foreby ganging to houk up hunder-year-audl bones." (*CJS*, p. 247) The rebuke is just. The shepherd's emphasis on the immediate tasks to be performed for survival in a village market-economy suggests that, unlike the city "Editor", he empathizes with the daily efforts of the peasants to keep themselves from ever-threatening hunger and finds in their folktales his own point of view. (One needs to remember that James Hogg had himself once lived in a hovel⁴⁹ at the mercy of his patrons.) The shepherd's gentle rebuke also establishes that for James Hogg there does exist an essential relationship between the economic conditions and the historical situations of the various narrators and the manner in which they each organize the tale to reveal their particular understanding of the human condition.⁵⁰ For the "Editor" it is George Colwan, the commonsensical brother, who is the real representative of the age and the person who resembles him the closest. For James Hogg, the novelist deeply influenced by Burnet's "Theory of the conflagration of the Earth" and its visions of "the grant millenium and the reign of the saints"⁵¹, it is the fanatical spirit of Robert Colwan that still persists and influences the lives of the pastoral poor. Each of the narrators, then, tells the story in a manner characteristic of his or her social and economic position.⁵²

The "Editor" places his version of the story within a clearly defined historical past, thus holding in uncomfortable tension the traditional story of diablerie and his own need for empirical

verifiability. The action begins in 1687 and is located within a period of mounting social, political and religious tensions after a brief pause in hostilities. The Colwan family which holds the lands of Dalcastel finds itself in an ambivalent position. Though the family's economic survival depends upon the continuation of feudal agricultural relations, yet it is neither entirely oblivious of nor wholly untouched by the new spirit of mercantile capitalism and Lockean liberalism (Locke's *Two Treatise of Government* was first composed in 1679-81 though it was published only in 1690) which had begun to shape lives at least in the more cosmopolitan towns. In the Border regions of Dalcastel the new science (Newton's *Principia* was published in 1687) and new economics hadn't yet "swept away most of the remaining vestiges of medievalism."⁵² Here life was still deeply scarred by long years of "disorder, bloodshed, and tyranny of the religious wars"⁵³, and the peasants and the labourers still carried on with their lives haunted by fears of starvation, witches, priests, lawyers, landlords and the devil. The laird's own life bristles with these contradictions. He retains his lands after the Restoration as a favour for his past political support, however mild, for the Royalists, despite his actual sympathies with the Covenanters. And he now marries, as a part of an economic and political arrangement, the daughter of a Glasgow merchant, and thereby adds to the existing conflicts between the old, traditional landed gentry and the new classes in the urban areas. The "Editor" is, of course, not fully cognizant of the material and historical conditions that produce these tensions and which frequently find outlet in cruel and sadistic actions. For him the conflict is between the rational concerns of the emerging classes, with George Colwan as their representative, and the irrational passions of the political past, expressed by Robert in the vocabulary of religious ecstasy. That is why he so blithely makes fun of Lady Dalcastel's Calvinism while upholding the behaviour of the drunken laird as commendable. His entire version reveals his lack of sensitivity to the lived experiences of the age within which the actions of the novel are located. Therefore, the structure he creates out of the events he narrates is only seemingly coherent and rational.

The age after the Glorious Revolution, in which the novel is set, may have been for the urban merchants and the educated elite

(a class to which the "Editor" belongs) a period of compromise and common sense. They may have thought of it as an age in which "old learning was everywhere in retreat"⁶⁴, and in which old controversies about religious faith were being replaced by discussions about the civil society in the calm, impersonal voice of good reason. But for a large section of the urban population and the country peasants, both in Scotland and in England, this belief in the moderateness, justness and reasonableness of the age must have been more mythical and rhetorical than actual. This was, after all, the age when in the streets could be seen the ugly spectacle presented by the dissected bodies of Cromwell, Harrison and others hanging from gibbets ; when the Royalists, led by Dalziel, could sadistically torture the defeated rebels at Rullion Green in the streets of Edinburgh⁶⁵ ; when Claverhouse could beat and plunder dissenters at will⁶⁶ ; when Shaftsbury could still hope to rouse the populace against the Catholics ; when in the streets could be heard from refugees horrid tales of the persecution of the Protestants in France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; when the Dutch wars had left thousands brutalized ; when the ruling court was dominated by 'turncoats' and 'timeservers' and parasitical courtiers⁶⁷ ; and when judgments were handed down by men like Chief Justice Jeffreys.⁶⁸ It is true that the intensity of political and religious debate may have decreased, but that was not because there had emerged out of the old contradictions a new and vital structure capable of satisfying human needs, but because after years of virulent strife "an interval of moral exhaustion had been reached."⁶⁹ Though Hogg may have been, as Sir Walter Scott often asserted, "profoundly ignorant of history"⁷⁰, he did seem to have understood that for a majority of the people the Revolution and the Union did not bring justice or human sympathy. He recognized that the late 17th century was not the comfortable age of improvement celebrated by Dryden, but was rather the cynical age of Samuel Butler "without compassion and without admiration, denying to humanity the slightest spark of nobility."⁷¹

In the countryside the Glorious Revolution rendered the social and political relations ambiguous and complicated. However, the economic conditions did not improve for the poor country people after the old feudal order was gradually replaced by the new

a new idiom of scientific rationality, and as Raymond Williams points out, a new social ideology to mask the actual living conditions of those who could not share in the new prosperity. The Revolution left intact the traditional dominating interests though it began to replace overt military and physical coercion by a more subtle "system of social and economic"⁶² controls. In his essay on the relation between property and social and legal control, Douglas Hay says that in this period "In place of police...propertied Englishmen had a fat and swelling sheaf of laws which threatened thieves with death."⁶³ He points out that between 1688 and 1810 capital offences, mostly against property, increased from 50 to 200.⁶⁴ From Williams we learn that though there were scientific achievements and there was agricultural growth, for the majority of the countryside the revolutionary change was nothing more than "the substitution of one form of domination for another: the mystified feudal order replaced by a mystified agrarian capitalist order with just enough continuity, in titles and in symbols of authority, in successive compositions of a 'natural order', to confuse and control."⁶⁵ The change in social ideology left intact power in the hands of the landlords while masking the actual pauperization and marginalization of the rural peasants.⁶⁶ It is not quite surprising then, to find that those who were reduced to a condition of chronic helplessness and economic vulnerability by the emerging agrarian mode of production, found relief in "eschatological phantasies" or adopted the language of the "Anti-Christ" in which to express their criticism against those in the social order whom they identified as the causes of their suffering.⁶⁷ The "Editor" fails to recognize that Robert's language, packed with metaphors of millennialist dreams, is a version of the idiom and myths which the poor and the dispossessed used to articulate their own despair.⁶⁸

If to live in the countryside was to be subject to cruelty and the arbitrary control of the landlords, to live in Edinburgh (where quite a bit of the action of the novel is set) in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was to experience the "real destructiveness and brutality"⁶⁹ of life and to see in the alleys grotesque figures eaten by hunger, humiliation and misery. William Ferguson in his history of Scotland says that old Edinburgh "was noted even in those unhygienic times for its poor sanitation and unsavoury smells."⁷⁰

Most visitors to the city were appalled by Edinburgh's "rabbit-warren"⁷¹ housing. For example, the traveller Joseph Taylor gives the following description of the daily living conditions of the middle-class inhabitants of the city in 1705 :

Every street shows the nastiness of the inhabitants : the excrements lie in heaps. ... In the morning the scent was so offensive that we were forc't to hold our nose as we past the streets and take care where we trod for fear of disoblising our shoes, and to walk in the middle at night for fear of an accident on our heads. The lodgings are as nasty as the streets, and wash't so seldom that the dirt is thick eno' to be par'd off with a shovel ; every room is well-scented with a closetool, and the master, mistress and servants lye all on a flour, like so many swine in a hogsty. This, with the rest of their sluttishness, is no doubt the occasion of the itch which is so common among them. We have the best lodgings ... and yet we went thro' the master's bedchamber, and the kitchen and dark entry to our room, which look't into a place they call the close, full of nastiness. 'Tis a common thing for a man or woman to go into these closes at all times of the day to ease nature.⁷²

The living space occupied by the lower classes and the poor was, of course, much worse and far more crowded. One needs to remember that Edinburgh during this period was not only one of the most squalid cities, it was also, with the exception of London and perhaps Bristol, one of the most crowded places in Britain.⁷³ When the new town was built for the emerging bourgeoisie in the 18th century this old town was left to the poor to become by the 19th century "a crammed slum" where 80,000 people lived in housing designed for 30,000.⁷⁴

The "Editor" of the first part of the novel, being a smug Tory, is quite unaware of the historical and the material conditions that lie behind those social processes. In the scene in which he recounts the assault by a mob composed of "a great number of boys and idle people" (*CJS*, p. 25), on the party of the Cavaliers assembled in the Black Bull Tavern, he reveals his lack of precise understanding of the factional rivalries by interpreting it as an example of the unreason of the past. For him mob violence is not an expression of the social and economic contradictions which the Restoration failed to resolve and which through the 19th century continued to challenge and disrupt social arrangements, but is a product of the barbaric passions of human beings unschooled in the methods of reasoned discourse. According to him people riot because of their "innate" imperfections

rather than, as Hogg agreeing with Rousseau would have insisted, the inequalities and felt injustices in the civil society. For him mob action is not a critique of society but a reflection of the evil nature of human beings. That is why, in spite of the fact that he recognizes that the mob, which in Edinburgh was highly "actuated by political motives" (*CJS*, p. 26), has not been initially incited by anti-social elements but by interested political and religious groups, he insists on mystifying the real causes of violence by discussing it in the idiom of wild and unmethodized nature. He thinks of the mob as "a spring-tide in an eastern storm, that retires only to return with more overwhelming fury" (*CJS*, p. 29) that has no human shadow and no human purpose. Discussing the malignancy of the mob he conveniently forgets that the party of the Cavaliers, which has his approval and to which George Colwan belongs, leaves behind in its trail quite a few people who are victimized for its peculiar pleasures, e.g., the unfortunate Mrs Logan who is doomed to wander the streets in search of some "prey" (*CJS*, p. 70) amongst the Cavaliers. "The most heinous atrocities" (*CJS*, p. 70) inflicted on her by a callous aristocracy, and there were many victims like her during the period, do not seem to much disturb the "Editor's" moral confidence. However, the mob action of the "idle vagarants" (*CJS*, p. 26) does. But instead of accounting for it in material terms he transforms the problem of living in an order to which poverty and hunger are part of the social drama, into a discussion of the irrationality of "natural" man, thereby reinforcing the moral and rational authority of the class to which he belongs. The "Editor" is not the normative voice of dispassionate reason but is rather the voice of the 18th century bourgeoisie. His interpretation of the Sinner's tale is neither entirely reliable nor entirely authentic. It fails to recognize that the "irrationalities" of past actions may be a result of individual psychosis, but are at the same time rooted in the inhospitability of the economic and social conditions and the disharmony of the historical moment. He cannot comprehend that there exists a fundamental relation between the "hideous events" (*CJS*, p. 1) of the tale and the "brutality of the age"⁷⁸. It is quite understandable why James Hogg, who wishes to anchor moral values in the real lived experiences of a community, dissociates himself from the "Editor" and, through his assumed character of a shepherd in the novel, gently mocks his economic and moral confidence when they meet each other.⁷⁹

Just as the authority of the "Editor's" mode of knowing is questioned and his version of the story is revealed to be a construct that is, at least in part, a product of his own subjectivity, his own history, so also is the authority of other narratives eroded by doubts about their authenticity and the capacity of the narrators for objective discourse. For example, the authenticity of the narrative by Hogg the shepherd is suspected and even shown to be false by other actors and narrators. The "Editor", for instance, doubts whether the letter by Hogg to the *Blackwood's* is not yet another of those attempts by the Magazine to hoax the readers into believing its "ingenious fancies" (*CJS*, p. 295). The ambiguities in the narrative are further intensified when real people are deliberately confused with their fictional presences. Thus, in the novel, Lokhart to whom the "Editor" turns for verification of the story, doubts the truth of the facts and suspects Hogg's capacity for objectivity. In answer to the "Editor's" inquiries about the factuality of the tale, he says: "I suppose so. For my part I never doubted the thing, having been told that there has been a deal of talking about it up in the forest for some time past. But, God knows: Hogg has imposed as ingenious lies on the public ere now." (*CJS*, p. 246) One is, of course, here being reminded of Hogg's earlier parodies of himself as the Ettrick Shepherd, a native and bumbling figure in *The Noctes Ambrosionae*. Soon after, the factual information given by Hogg the shepherd, particularly about the site of the grave and the manner of burial, is shown to be false by another shepherd who agrees to guide the "Editor" and William Laidlaw. William Beattie, a shepherd who drifts into this novel from one of James Hogg's other stories, thereby creating another illusion, upon hearing of the letter in *Blackwood's* about the suicide dismisses the whole story as false:

He said there was hardly a bit o't correct, for the grave was not on the hill of Cowan's-Croft, nor yet on the point where three laird's lands met, but on the top of a hill called Faw-Law, where there was no land that was not the Duke of Buccleuch's within a quarter of a mile. He added that it was a wonder how the poet could be mistaken there, who once herded the very ground where the grave is, and saw both hills from his window. Mr. L—w testified great surprise at such a singular blunder, as also how the body came *not* to be buried at the meeting of three or four laird's lands, which had always been customary in the south of Scotland." (*CJS*, p. 248)

Our understanding of the tale is rendered even more ambiguous as we read Robert Wringhim's version of the events published by him in his *Confessions*. In his *Confessions*, written in the form of an allegory, he objectifies himself as an Other and thereby creates a paranoid system of discourse in which he is simultaneously the object of knowledge and the knowing subject. However, unlike the Romantic poets for whom the conscious recognition of such a separation could lead to a greater clarity and understanding of the Self and its relation to the world of perpetual change,⁷⁷ Robert's *Confessions* records the Self's loss of creative autonomy and its failure to achieve, even momentarily, the calm maturity of wisdom. Instead of gaining knowledge, his recollections merely lead him further and further into madness and increase his agonized sense of enthrallment of the Self by a totally alien spectral power subject to no rational control. He thinks of himself as a man "bewitched" (*CJS*, p. 153) and then adds:

I generally conceived myself to be two people. When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it ; when I sat up, I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me towards my left side. It mattered not how many or how few were present : this my second self was sure to be present in this place ; and this occasioned a confusion in all my words and ideas that utterly astounded my friends, who all declared, that instead of being deranged in my intellect, they had never heard my conversation manifest so much energy or sublimity of conception ; but for all that, over the singular delusion that I was two persons, my reasoning faculties had no power. The most perverse part of it was, that I rarely conceived *myself* to be any of the two persons." (*CJS*, p. 154 ; italics in the novel)

It is this lack of assurance of a unique identity that can produce out of "earthly misery and despair" (*CJS*, p. 237) an acceptable and coherent human design, that produces in Robert terror and despair. He is "doomed to remain in misery, subjugated, soul and body" (*CJS*, p. 189) till the body crumbles into "utter oblivion" (*CJS*, p. 184). Thus, the Self is transformed, not into a place of a humanizing visions, but into a demonic region where the nightmare creatures have their being. As Robert, nearing the end of his strange narrative says : "I felt as one round whose body a deadly snake is twisted, which continues to hold him in its fangs, without injuring him, farther than in moving its scaly infernal folds with exulting delight, to let its victim feel to whose power he has sub-

jected himself; and thus did I for a space drag an existence from day to day in utter weariness and helplessness ... " (*CJS*, pp. 192-93) Robert's realization that he must regain control over his human destiny comes too late. Having abdicated the sovereignty of the Self to Gil-Martin, the "master spirit of desolation" (*CJS*, p. 148), Robert slowly becomes the demonic Other.

The peasants, since they are unembroiled in the action and retain only a marginal place in the social and economic culture, alone possess the necessary disinterestedness to be aware of his radical transformation. At first they confuse him with Gil-Martin, and then each of them with the Devil: "... an' they say,—lord have a case o' us!—they say the deil's often seen gaun sidie for sidie 2'ye, whiles in ae shape, an' whiles in another. An' they say that he whiles takes your ain shape, or else enters into you, and then your turn a deil yoursel." (*CJS*, p. 195) And again later, when Robert trying to escape from Gil-Martin finds himself inextricably bound in a peasant named John Dods, he is identified with the Devil. John Dods says: "Wha wad hae thought that John Dods should hae escapit a' the snares an' dangers that circumfauldit him, an' at last should hae weaved a net to catch the deil." (*CJS*, p. 217)

It should be quite evident by now that Robert's version of the tale is also inauthentic and his perception and memory of the history of his actions lacks truthfulness and accuracy. If the "Editor's" tale is coloured by his specific place in society and its prejudices, Robert's history is infected by moral and intellectual corruption. That is why he is never sure about his actions. He doesn't know if it was his bullet that killed Rev. Blanchard, or whether he really stabbed his brother George, or whether he did rape a woman, or kill his mother. There is a total estrangement between him and the actions he is supposed to have committed. The Self reduces itself to the status of an object, an "It", incapable of regaining a rational and secure place within a creative human community.

This understanding of radical dislocation of the Self from all human and social concerns is given adequate objective form in the diary fragments given at the end of the *Confessions* published by the "Editor". This part is composed of the "unconnected exclamations" (Shelley's phrase) of Robert Wringhim as he is pursued during the last days of his earthly existence by an "unholy" (*CJS*, p. 227) creature with a "hideous countenance" (*CJS*, p. 229). His wild ravings

create the impression of the rapid and agonized disintegration of the Self into utter annihilation. Each day is recorded serially creating a sense of aimless flight and pursuit whose end is the inevitable destruction of the Self. During his last days Robert sees himself as a man who is in a "pilgrimage state" (*CJS*, p. 235) and, indeed, the last gruesome visions he has curiously resemble the last spectral dreams and the darkest moments of anguish of saints and mystics and Romantic pilgrims before their final illumination, their final release from the despair of Selfhood⁷⁸ :

I had that within which would not suffer me to close my eyes ; and about the dead of night, I again heard the same noises and contention begin outside the house, as I had heard the night before ; and again I heard it was about a sovereign and peculiar right in me. At one time the noise was on the top of the house, straight above our bed, as if the one party were breaking through the roof, and the other forcibly preventing it ; at another time it was at the door, and at a third time at the window. ... The women ... were alarmed, and, rushing into our apartment, exclaimed that all the devils in hell were besieging the house ... for the tumult had increased to such a degree, that it shook the house to its foundations, being louder and more furious than I could have conceived the heat of battle to be when the volleys of artillery are mixed with groans, shouts, and blasphemous cursing. It thundered and lightened ; and there were screams, groans, laughter, and execrations, all intermingled. ... The scene that ensued is neither to be described, nor believed, if it were. I was momentarily surrounded by a number of hideous fiends, who gnashed on me with their teeth, and clenched their crimson paws in my face ; and at the same instant I was seized by the collar of my coat behind by my dreaded and devoted friend, who pushed me on, and, with his gilded rapier waving and brandishing around me, defended me against all their united attacks. Horrible as my assailants were in appearance, (and they had all monstrous shapes,) I felt that I would rather have fallen into their hands, than be thus led away captive by my defender at his will and pleasure, without having the right or power to say my life, or any part of my will, was my own. (*CJS*, pp. 231-33)

Robert's pilgrimage ends not in the sudden irruption of the sacred, but in the further enthrallment (to use a favourite Romantic word) of the Self by necromantic powers. He now realizes that his "hour of repentance is past" (*CJS*, p. 240), and that the recollection of his life offers him no basis for knowledge or for moral regeneration. The diary fragments create this sense of loss of control over his destiny and of the failure of the Self to discover reason or clarity.

These fragments, while they evoke our sympathy for a tortured soul, add to our confusion and make the events more enigmatic, spectral or illusory. We feel the agony, but are not entirely certain of all the objective causes. Indeed, we are left in a world of shifting shadows and half-lights, of real and phantasmal events that evade our attempts at rational ordering. The novel creates neither a secure world of fixities and definitudes nor a fabricated one of dreams, but a demonic world made up at once of historical events and false resemblances, of defined objects and *simulcra*; a world where each event, each Self is subject to discontinuity and chance; a world that seems to possess no informing rationality and offers no possibility of creative fullness. The novel's fragmentary and discontinuous structure gives shape to a demonic pilgrimage at a certain moment of crisis in history which leads the bewildered participant, not to the divine city⁷⁹ of Bunyan or Blake where each human being can converse "as Man with Man in the Ages of Eternity", but further beyond into the "shores of darkness" where each is isolated and spellbound in his Selfhood and is condemned to repeat purposeless actions in an unregenerative society.

Like Hogg's *Confessions*, the structural arrangements of other Gothic novels is neither static nor imitative of some pre-fabricated design. In each of the Gothic structures the sense of completion or of unity proves to be only a mirage. Each novel, composed of fragments, dream-sequences, tales recollected by chance, narratives with frequent disruptions in their chronological flow, is told from the points of view of a number of isolated, bewildered subjects, neither of whom can ever achieve a fully realized identity and thereby gain the vantage point from which the whole set of events can be viewed as a meaningful whole. The structure of each of the Gothic novels thus resembles Hogg's *Confessions*, in that, each takes shape out of the central concern of the novelists with the fragmentation of the Self and its loss of authority and the resulting enigma of its relationship with the natural, social and material world perpetually subject to chance, discontinuity and decay.

For example, the wild profusion of tales which make up Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* is bounded by specific historical and social conditions that came into being in Ireland with the Cromwellian civil wars. The narrative covers a time span from 1646 (soon after the defeat of the Royalist armies) to 1816, which roughly brought

one phase of the bourgeois revolution to a close (Hogg's *Confessions*, which was influenced by Maturin's novel, covers the same period for Scotland). The fate of Melmoth, and incidentally of Maturin's own legendary version of his family history,⁸⁰ is coincident with critical moments in Irish political history, and Maturin, the Irish nationalist, is well aware of the material interests involved at at these points.⁸¹ The result is that the novel is firmly grounded both in the civil and political conditions of Ireland following Cromwell's invasion in 1649 (British domination of Ireland was completed in 1690-91 after the decisive defeats at Boyne and at Limerick), as well as in the human and material consequences for the Irish of the general economic and social transition from feudal modes of production to agrarian and mercantile capitalism and, finally, to industrial development. Maturin, however, understood quite well that these large political and historical movements did not succeed in releasing a majority of the Irish from their condition of "filth and famine" (*M*, p. 22) but merely created new trappings for their economic and political domination.⁸² When the English conquered Ireland they discovered that the majority of the people lived within, as Sean O'Faolain puts it, a feudal structure in which "they had hardly any moral (or immoral) compensations—such as a share in the spoils—for the increasing exactions of their chieftains."⁸³ But the transformations brought about by the English Revolutions did not create a new moral community with a more egalitarian system of distribution of the real increase in wealth. Instead, as O'Faolain points out, the English discovered in Ireland a new breed of common people whom they called "boors", both for cruel fun and for profitable utilization of their labour.⁸⁴

It is not surprising then that for Maturin, as for the nationalist-minded Hogg, historical and social changes over this period do not offer reasons for optimism. Rather, his real social theme is the "unrelenting and unmitigated" (*M*, p. 204) degradation of human beings and the progressive refinement in the instruments of torture and the intensification of suffering. Unlike the Enlightenment historians, for him "the clam and silent progress of time" (*M*, p. 187) does not open up possibilities of future development; instead, it merely reveals, as in Moncada's tale of Inquisitional cruelty, "the tumultuous confusion of midnight horror, — this scene of the physical and mental world in an agony of fruitless and incessant

motion ..." (*M*, p. 187). That is why each separate tale, covering a unique period in history, is "saturated with cruelty and blood" (*M*, p. 196) and every succeeding incident is "perhaps more bloody and wild than the former" (*M*, p. 212). This is how Melmoth (who is now certainly the spokesman for Maturin) in 1680⁴⁵ describes the condition of Western societies to Imalee before she is removed from her prelapsarian paradise in the Indian Ocean :

"They come," said he, pointing to the European vessels, "from a world where the only study of the inhabitants is how to increase their own sufferings, and those of others, to the utmost possible degree ; and, considering they have only had 4000 years practice at the task, it must be allowed they are tolerable proficient. ... [T]hey have been all originally gifted with imperfect constitutions and evil passions ; and, not to be ungrateful, they pass their lives in contriving how to augment the infirmities of the one, and aggravate the acerbities of the other.... [T]hese people pique themselves on their ingenuity in aggravating the sufferings of their situation, they leave thousands of human beings yearly to perish by hunger and grief, and amuse themselves in feeding on animals, whom, by depriving of existence, they deprive of the only pleasure their condition has allotted them. When they have thus, by unnatural diet and outrageous stimulation, happily succeeded in corrupting infirmity into disease, and exasperating passion into madness, they proceed to exhibit the proofs of their success, with an expertness and consistency truly admirable. They do not, like you, Immalee, live in the lovely independence of nature—lying on the earth, and sleeping with all the eyes of heaven unveiled to watch you—treading the same grass till your light step feels a friend in every blade it presses—and conversing with flowers, till you feel yourself and them children of the united family of nature, whose mutual language of love you have almost learned to speak to each other—no, to effect their purpose, their food, which is of itself poison, must be rendered more fatal by the air they inhale ; and therefore the more civilized crowd all together into a space which their own respiration, and the exhalation of their bodies, renders pestilential, and which gives a cerlerity inconceivable to the circulation of disease and mortality. Four thousand of them will live together in a space smaller than the last and lightest colonnade of your young banyan-tree, in order, doubtless, to increase the effects of foetid air, artificial heat, unnatural habits, and impracticable exercise. The result of these judicious precautions is just what may be guessed. The most trifling complaint becomes immediately infectious, and during the ravages of the pestilence, which this habit generates, ten thousand lives a-day are the customary sacrifice to the habit of living in cities.... To these cities they resort nominally for security and protection, but really for the sole purpose to which their existence is devoted, that of aggravating its miseries by every ingenuity of refinement. For example, those who live in uncontrasted and untantalized misery, can hardly feel

it—suffering becomes their habit, and they feel no more jealousy of their situation than the bat, who clings in blind and famishing stupefaction to the cleft of a rock, feels of the situation of the butterfly, who drinks of the dew, and bathes in the bloom of every flower. But the people of *the other* worlds have invented, by means of living in cities, a new and singular mode of aggravating human wretchedness—that of contrasting it with the wild and wanton excess of superfluous and extravagant splendour....

This ... is the most exquisite refinement on that art of torture which those beings are so expert in—to place misery by the side of opulence—to bid the wretch who dies for want feed on the sound of the splendid equipages which shake his hovel as they pass, but leave no relief behind—to bid the industrious, the ingenious, and the imaginative, starve, while bloated mediocrity pants from excess—to bid the dying sufferer feel that life might be prolonged by one drop of that exciting liquor, which wasted, produces only sickness or madness in those whose lives it undermines ;—to do this is their principal object, and it is fully attained. The sufferer through whose rags the wind of winter blows, like arrows lodging in every pore—whose tears freeze before they fall—whose soul is as dreary as the night under whose cope his resting-place must be—whose glued and clammy lips are unable to receive the food which famine, lying like a burning coal at his vitals, craves—and who, amid the horrors of a houseless winter, might prefer its desolation to that of the den that abuses the name of home—without food—without light—where the howlings of the storm are answered by the fiercer cries of hunger—and he must stumble to his murky and strawless nook over the bodies of his children, who have sunk on the floor, not for rest, but despair. Such a being, is he not sufficiently miserable ?” (*M*, pp. 230-32)

For Maturin, Irish social and economic history, which gives the novel its structural frame and also makes more unbearably real its “diabolical eloquence of horror” (*M*, p. 44), is a particular instance of the grotesque pattern of human cruelty and of human misery which has persisted over the centuries. Melmoth, who has witnessed it all and who is condemned to remember it all (for him, as for the fallen Titans in Keats’s *Hyperion* “memory... becomes a depository of grief” *M*, p. 346), recognizes that in such a world there is no possibility of material relief or of spiritual consolation. Like him, human beings with consciousness, as all the narrators in the novel are, have been condemned to their fate as the ‘adventurers of despair’ (*M*, p. 407) wandering “amid worlds of barrenness and curse for ever and ever” (*M*, p. 408)²⁰. The only thing human beings can do in this world is to yield to their fate in an agony of despair and hope for an end of their “painful pilgrimage” (*M*, p. 277) in death.

In the novel the saturnalia of time (the bloody chaos of mobs, hunger, immurements, cannibalism, sadism, *autos-de-fé*) is not, as some critics have asserted, burnt away as in some religious rite by the purifying fires of suffering; the time of horror is not transformed at the end into sacred time; the last moment does not signify a *kairos*—a “significant season”—bringing to an end all cruelty.⁸⁷ That is why the novel’s structure has no continuous movement, and no single character emerges from grotesqueries of the world into knowledge where, like Goethe’s Faust, he can “know himself in a good sense.”⁸⁸ The different tales are not arranged according to any linear temporal order,⁸⁹ and their discontinuity and fragmentation testifies to Moncada’s assertion that “despair has no diary—monotony is her essence and her curse” (*M*, p. 135). The tales told by multiple narrators are scattered through time and they intersect each other, often arbitrarily, to create around Melmoth a wilderness of histories without any centrally organizing set of moral values or any recognizable human end.⁹⁰ Time past and present are so gorged full of horrors that no distinctions are possible; it is as if Cronus is confused by the enormity of suffering and the desolation of the victims. Appropriately, the novel ends as it opens, with the sterile vision of “the wild, waste, engulfing ocean” (*M*, p. 412). This spatial and temporal image is structurally adequate. It concretizes the idea that the novel is so composed that each moment of suffering emerges out of the previous one and collapses into the one to follow and that this flow is as ceaseless as it is wasteful and futile.

Space forbids any detailed analysis of the internal structure of this complex novel. Therefore, I should like to analyze here a fragment which is embedded within the discontinuous and half decipherable manuscript containing Stanton’s tale in order to show how adequately Maturin has rendered in concrete historical and human terms the idea of the disintegration of the Self in a world without humanizing values. Stanton’s tale, like any other tale in the novel, is not written from the point of view of the contemplative Self informed about its engagement with the real world and looking back over the journey it has undertaken towards knowledge,⁹¹ but from that of a Self at the verge of madness obsessively recording its progress towards annihilation. The incident Stanton records takes place on the night of 17th August 1677 (and in a particular part of the general demonism of the age of Charles II)⁹² amidst the

ruins of old fortresses where he had sought refuge (after being betrayed by his guide) from the terrors of a storm. As he stands under the arches he watches lightning strike the old towers and shatter them to bits. And then he sees the following incident which in its manner of narration from multiple points of view and its brief, but incandescent horror, can be seen as a paradigm for the demonic structure of the entire novel :

Stanton was thinking thus, when all power of thought was suspended, by seeing two persons bearing between them the body of a young, and apparently very lovely girl, who had been struck dead by the lightning. Stanton approached, and heard the voices of the bearers repeating, "There is none who will mourn for her !"

"There is none who will mourn for her !" said other voices, as two more bore in their arms the blasted and blackened figure of what had once been a man, comely and graceful ;—"there is not one to mourn for her now !" They were lovers, and he had been consumed by the flash that had destroyed her, while in the act of endeavouring to defend her.

As they were about to remove the bodies, a person approached with a calmness of step and demeanour, as if he were alone unconscious of danger, and incapable of fear ; and after looking on them for some time, burst into a laugh so loud, wild, and protracted, that the peasants, starting with as much horror at the sound as at that of the storm, hurried away, bearing the corpse with them. Even Stanton's fears were subdued by his astonishment, and, turning to the stranger, who remained standing on the same spot, he asked the reason of such an outrage of humanity. The stranger, slowly turning round, and disclosing a countenance which—(Here the manuscript was illegible for a few lines), said in English—(A long hiatus followed here, and the next passage that was legible, though it proved to be a continuation of the narrative, was but a fragment). (*M*, p. 23)

In one spectacular instance the fragment, written by Stanton and now read by the younger Melmoth at a different moment in history, transforms the dull pain of ordinary living through the ages into a demonic *hierophany*.¹⁸ The horrific suddenly breaks into the daily world negating all possibilities of realizing through empathy a durable social community. All that is left is the precise moment of disintegration ; the paradoxical moment in which in the expenditure of excess of energy all life is extinguished and all human meaning destroyed. The structure of the fragment gives appropriate visual and temporal shape to completed historical moment which is yet not a part of any continuous and universal whole (it thereby violates the assumptions of the formalists). The lovers are burnt to death,

nature remains indifferent to their fate, men recognize utter loneliness, Melmoth is ecstatic over the sheer exuberance of destruction and suffering, while Stanton, the lost traveller totally remote from the human scene, watches the process of ruination and sacrilege without discovering there any coherence or purpose, or any possibility for the renewal of a blasted world. Other stories told by other narrators follow a similar pattern to create a novel whose discontinuity and fragmentariness marks a clearly realized historical world without any centralizing moral purpose."⁴

Quite a few of the other Gothic novels are similarly structured. *Frankenstein* is told from a variety of points of view and is firmly located in the objective conditions of 19th century Europe. The entire story is told through a series of letters by a man who is unsure of the authenticity of the tale told to him by Victor Frankenstein who in turn, cannot authenticate the Monster's narrative. *The Monk* is, similarly, a collection of narratives each with a new beginning and forming a cumulative history of horror and of sorrow.⁹⁶ Mrs Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Italian* and *The Romance of the Forest* are also so structured that they violate the laws of unity, intelligibility and progression, and succeed in creating a state of unreason. Each novel by Mrs Radcliffe is made up of a multiple set tales with each tale offering a partial glimpse of the Self's identity. The Self's history, possessing neither completion nor emerging towards some rational coherence, is revealed through chance discoveries of old manuscript fragments, or through enigmatic dreams, or through overheard whispers, or through glimpses of mysterious portraits which seem to carry the burden of the Self's history. Furthermore, in each of her novels the fate of the characters is centrally involved with the vagaries of the market economy which is alien to human needs, the arbitrary actions of the Law, the State and the Church, and the inauspicious powers of nature that often transform chance encounters between human beings and the outer world into a catastrophic happening. Her novels, of course, end with the seeming restoration of the laws of reason and good will; the lovers marry and the peasants dance in 'holiday' abandon in the moonlight. But since, at the end, there is no qualitative radical change in the objective conditions that existed at the beginning, the stability of the end is a mirage. The characters may express confidence in the ability of virtuous minds to endure and

transcend the present evil and thus affirm the world as a "grand compact of hamony and joy" (*RF*, p. 428), but their affirmations lack conviction. The brutal and the lawless aspects of life remain. Mrs Radcliffe's novels are vast structures of pain which cannot be made to wither away by simple-minded assertions of faith in the existence of divine justice and the rationality of men.⁹⁶ One cannot escape the feeling that the consolations offered at the end of each of her novels are only a momentary respite for tortured souls; that the marriage ritual is only a temporary stay against chaos. Thus, because Mrs Radcliffe deals with the problematic of the Self lost in the corruption and the unrest of the experiential world, one can assert that the structures of her novels only seemingly affirm neo-classical norms of order, reason and taste, and that their internal ordering denies the validity of those 'pure' models of the Gothic form which are fabricated by the modern formalist critics.

The structure of a large number of Gothic novels is, then, made up like *The Thousand and One Nights* of a profusion of tales told by a variety of narrators. But, whereas, each tale in *The Thousand and One Nights* is part of a sacred geometry and is an ornamental and playful variation on the original, the cosmogonic, act of creation,⁹⁷ in the Gothic novel each tale reveals only yet another instance of agony and decay and ends with the final collapse of the Self into non-being. The fragmentary and discontinuous structures of the Gothic novels give adequate shape to the privation and the anguish of the Self unable to discover in this world of temporality, hunger, unending labour, Inquisitional torture, hatred and revenge, conflict and coercion, a recognizable social or moral or spiritual purpose. The Gothic novel, though apparently without a coherent design or structural unity, offers an entirely adequate record, not of the Empiricist's confidence in a rational order or of the visionary's dream of Identity through the union of the profane subject and the Divine 'Other', but of *demonic rituals* forever resulting in madness, infinite pain, wasteful expenditure of creative energies and the irredeemable disintegration of the Self at a specific moment in the history of Western consciousness.

NOTES

1 See for example *The Letters of Anna Seward: Written between the Years 1784 and 1807* (Edinburgh and London, 1811). In a letter to Rev H.F. Carey (August 7, 1806) she declares with typical neo-classical resolve that "the terrible graces should not be slipshod", (VI, 305) and proceeds to judge some Gothic novels against this norm. She likes the novels of Mrs Radcliffe but finds that *The Italian* is structurally disappointing. In a letter to Mrs Childers (August 16, 1797) she says that "Its language and its landscapes are, as usual with her (Mrs Radcliffe's) pen, very good; the story also, as usual, toils after the terrible; but produces it, surely, with less effect than in her former publications. The incidents are confused, improbable, and ill-accounted for in the denouement. Some of the mysterious circumstances are left in impervious darkness." (IV, 382-83) She obviously disapproves of the novel's structural discontinuity, its occasional wildness of imagery, and its ambiguous resolution of the action at the end. Her attack on Godwin's *Galeb Williams* in a letter to Rev T.S. Whalley (June 7, 1799) is even more revealing of the neo-classical demands for rationally affirmed structures. She asserts that the excesses of passion displayed by Falkland are merely "monstrous and inconceivable", that the process of demonization of his soul is incompetently sketched. Unappreciative of the narrative structure of the novel which emphasizes the fragmentariness and the discontinuity of growth of the narrator, she shifts emphasis and complains that Falkland's moral decay "violates all unity of character, the only dramatic unity which ought to be kept sacred." (V, 244) For more details about the attitude of the Augustans to the Gothic novel see Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest* (1938; rpt, New York, 1964) and Dan J. Mcutt, *The Eighteenth Century Gothic Novel: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism and Selected Texts* (New York and London, 1875).

2 *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (Octagon, 1967).

3 *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance* (New York, 1920).

4 *The Supernatural in Fiction* (New York, 1965), p. 6.

5 *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism* (New York, 1964).

6 Walter Benjamin points out that among the medieval theologians the attempt to accumulate and to totally immerse oneself in the data about a particular historical period was the "root cause of sadness". He also recalls Flaubert who, in a similar spirit, wrote about his days spent in collecting material for *Salammbô*: "Peu de gens devineront combien il a fallu être triste pour ressusciter Carthage. (Few will be able to guess how sad one had to be in order to resuscitate Carthage.) "Theses on the Philosophy of History", *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arndt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1969), p. 256.

7 *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Lawrence Scott (Austin and London, 1968). In order to discover the basic structure of the folktale Propp made a synchronic study of a selected number of folktales from Afanasiyev's collection

of *Russian Fairy Tales*. He determined that though they have a variety of *dramatis personae* with distinct attributes, their actions or, what he calls their functions, remain invariable. He found that folktales are amazingly uniform and repetitious structurally because the functions performed by the different actors in them are limited and invariable. Applying to the structure of the folktale methods borrowed from the natural sciences, Propp isolated thirty-one functions which make up the structure of the folktale. He insisted that the sequence in which these functions occur in any fairy tale is always the same. This, of course, led him to the logical conclusion that "All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure." (p. 23) Propp's morphological study reveals that the folktale is not an inexhaustible dreaming thing tense with sacramental symbols releasing generative power, but a classifiable natural object important for its structural properties in the study of the science of man. Propp's abstract formal model of the folktale, while it makes us aware of the sharpness of detail and the discipline of internal relationships, and while it radically challenges the "primitivist" and "irrationalist" analysis of the savage mind by 19th century theorists, also falsifies one's actual experience with the marvellous multiplicity of the folktales. Propp's spatial model, however brilliant, is unsatisfactory because it removes the folktale from any temporal involvements even though, as Alan Dundes in his "Introduction" to Propp's work points out, many of the functions that he insists invariably come together to construct its structure are loaded with socio-cultural meanings (e.g., the function which brings the tale to a close—"Marriage"). Also see Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structure and form: Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp", in *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Monique Layton, II (New York, 1976), pp. 109-33; and Alan Dundes, "Structural Typology in North American Indian Folktales," in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood, 1965), pp. 206-15.

8 "The Mystery Novel: Dickens's *Little Dorrit*", in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, eds. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1971), p. 220. Also see a suggestive little piece in the same collection by Roman Jakobsen and Petr Bogatyrev, "On the Boundary between Studies of Folklore and Literature, pp. 91-93.

9 The parts that make up this "unpure" object are isolated and characterized by Sklovskij as follows: "Anne (sic) Radcliffe, one of the originators of the mystery novel, organized her tales on such a pattern: the heroine finds herself in a castle; she sees a decomposing corpse behind a curtain; spirits wander through the castle; someone invisible interjects his remarks into the conversations of drunken robbers, and so on. The solutions to these mysteries are revealed only at the end of the volume. The corpse is made of wax; it was placed there as a penance by one of the proprietor's ancestors, a count, under the Pope's instructions. The mysterious voice belongs to a prisoner who wanders through secret passages. As you see, the solutions to these mysteries (as a contemporary remarked) are at best only partially satisfactory.

In the second part, the scenario begins again. A new castle. New mysterious

voices are heard. These prove subsequently to belong to smugglers. Music resounds all around the castle : this turns out to be a nun playing, and so forth ..." (p. 220)

For the structural anatomy of the riddle see Elli Konges Maranda, "The Logic of Riddles", in *Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, eds. Pierre Maranda and Elli Konges Maranda (Philadelphia 1971), pp. 182-232. She says that "riddles are one of the most strictly regular poetic forms", (p. 190) in which both image and answer are "preestablished, coded" (p. 192).

10 Trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland and London, 1973).

11 Todorov, p. 35.

12 Todorov, p. 25.

13 Todorov classifies the various Gothic novels as follows : "The fantastic therefore leads a life full of dangers, and may evaporate at any moment. It seems to be located in the frontier of two genres, the marvellous and the uncanny, rather than to be an autonomous genre. One of the great periods of supernatural literature, that of the Gothic novel, seems to confirm this observation. Indeed, we generally distinguish, within the literary Gothic, two tendencies : that of the supernatural explained (the "uncanny"), as it appears in the novels of Clara Reeves and Ann Radcliffe; and that of the supernatural accepted (Horace Walpole, M.G. Lewis, and Mathurin (sic)). Here we find not the fantastic in the strict sense, only genres adjacent to it. More precisely, the effect of the fantastic is certainly produced, but during only a portion of our reading : in Ann Radcliffe, up to the moment when we are sure that everything which has happened is susceptible of a rational explanation ; in M.G. Lewis, up to the moment when we are sure that the supernatural events will receive *no* in both cases—that what we call the fantastic has not existed." (pp. 41-42)

14 Todorov, p. 7.

15 This point is made by Christine Brooke-Rose in "Historical Genres/Theoretical Genres : A Discussion of Todorov on the Fantastic", *New Literary History : A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, 8 (1976), 145-70.

16 See Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight : Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York, 1971). In reference to Todorov's concern with accurate description and identity Paul de Man says : "The necessary immanence of the reading in relation to the text is a burden from which there can be no escape." (p. 110)

Also see Geoffrey H. Hartman, *The Fate of Reading and Other Essays* (Chicago and London, 1975). Hartman says : "We do not ask for personality in the critic any more than in the artist. Nor do we ask him to suppress it. We ask him not to hide behind his text. The writer of fiction has a persona, a face wrought from life to look at life with, and often more than one face. Should the interpreter not have personae ? Is it not his strength to be as deeply moved by works of Imagination as by life itself ? Interpreter : define thyself." (p. 10)

17 Another effort at classification of the genres to which the Gothic novel may

belong is made more recently by Eric S. Rabkin in *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton, 1976).

18 Trans. Harold A. Basilius (Detroit, 1972), pp. 5-44. Insisting that content or meaning is unimportant she says that "Every one of Tieck's fairy tales is a model in its use of literary signs. In the last analysis the tale is made from a bird song in which the words dance out of line, from the scarlet of a dress and the bloody red in a silver chalice, from a rare goblet and a life between a lute which is out of tune and the hieroglyphs of ancient books." (p. 22)

19 "Adonais", *Shelley: Poetical Works*, p. 442.

20 For a more detailed discussion of Thalmann's book see my article "Gothic as Verbal Fabrication", in *The Journal of Arts and Ideas*, Vol. I, no. 3, 63-66.

21 "King Lear as Metaphor", in *Myth and Symbol—Critical Approaches and Applications*, ed. Bernice Sloth (Lincoln, 1963), p. 23.

22 Recent studies of witchcraft show that belief in witches and demons flourishes when social definitions and moral law become ambiguous. More specifically, accusations of witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England arose, as Keith Thomas demonstrates, "at a time when the old tradition of mutual charity was being sapped by the introduction of a national Poor Law." The Poor Law made the position of the poor and the social role of the Christian householder ambiguous. For while the clergy still insisted on the quality of charity, the resulting "conflict between resentment and a sense of obligation produced the ambivalence which made it possible for men to turn begging women brusquely from the door and yet to suffer torments of conscience after having done so. This ensuing guilt was fertile ground for witchcraft accusations, since subsequent misfortune could be seen as retaliation on the part of the witch. The tensions that produced witchcraft allegations were thus those generated by a society which no longer held a clear view as to how its dependent members should be treated; they reflected the ethical conflict between twin and opposing doctrines that those who did not work should not eat, and that it was blessed for the rich to support the poor." (in *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas, p. 67). For an intensely local account of witchcraft and its relation to changing social, economic, political and religious assumptions see A.D.J. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (New York, 1970).

23 Mircea Eliade's phrase, taken from *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1968), p. 104.

24 Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 41.

25 The formalist claim of disinterested objectivity of critical method invites demystification, for one wants to know the social and personal interests that are masked (as in the case of T.S. Eliot's notion of impersonality) by the decorous surfaces. Geoffrey H. Hartman is correct in saying that "Beauty of this undetermined kind becomes an itch: the mind, says Empson, wants to scratch it, to see what is really there." (*op. cit.*, p. 125)

Jean-Paul Sartre in a comment on the structuralists said that at bottom of the structuralist attempts lies "a very Cartesian attitude" and an "indictment against time", that is, against the very "historical movement" through which each subjectivity seeks to realize its identity. "Replies to Structuralism: An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre", *Telos*, no. 7-10 (1971), 114-15.

26 Shelley: *Poetical Works*, p. 437.

27 In fact, some Gothic tales were written quite deliberately as fragments. For example, Mrs Anne Letitia Barbauld's "Sir Bertrand", in *Gothic Tales of Terror: Classic Horror Stories from Great Britain*, ed. Peter Haining (Baltimore, 1973), I, 44-48; and Nathan Drake's "On Objects of Terror. Montmorenci, a Fragment", in *Literary Hours: or Sketches, Critical, Narrative, and Poetical*, I (London, 1820), 269-84.

For a cruder imitation of the Gothic fragment see "The White Woman of Berlin: A Fragment", in *Legends of Terror! and Tales of the Wonderful and the Wild* (London, 1826), p. 400. Since this volume is extremely rare and the tale quite singular, I have decided to quote the story in its entirety:

"As I live," said Conrad, "the woman in white has been sweeping the apartments of our royal master, and the symptoms of approaching death are palpably discovered in this mysterious work. Woe, to the kingdom of Prussia, for its monarch will speedily be laid in the dust of the grave!"

"You make my blood curdle," said Agatha, "at this announcement of your fears; and yet I am told, by reason, to deride their superstitious tendency. What do you mean, by this woman all in white; and how is her hidden agency connected with the king's disorder?"

"Young woman," replied the hoary Conrad, "what these eyes have witnessed, surely these lips may declare; and if ever the shadows of supernatural creation were the WHITE WOMAN OF BERLIN. It is an old tradition that she appears regularly at such period as any member of the Royal Family is struggling under mortal disease; and her coming, in the course of twelve months has been followed by the dissolution that it threatened."

"Go on," articulated Agatha, in breathless amazement.

"I had just equipped my late master in his military uniform, and seen him seated, for the last time, in that chair, which received his final sigh, when the gracious Monarch, squeezing my hand with a gentle pressure, motioned me to quit the room. I obeyed, and passed into an inner apartment—the shades of twilight had filled it with thick gloom, and I proceeded a few paces beyond the threshold, when, on raising my eyes, they encountered the form of a female, clad in white garments, and of gigantic stature! The blood shot to my brain as I beheld this visionary figure; but, I am a Christian—"

"Forbear!" screamed Agatha, sick and fainting with alarm.

"I saw her gliding slowly through the room, and, though my eyes were rivetted with horror, I caught a glance of the ghastly hue that overspread her countenance, and - Gracious God! - look there!"

"Agatha shrieked, and fell senseless to the floor, as she beheld...."

28 *Prometheus Unbound*, in *Shelley : Poetical Works*, p. 236.

29 *The Prelude*, Bk II, in *Wordsworth : Poetical Works*, p. 506.

30 *Shelley : Poetical Works*, p. 436.

31 The Gothic form possesses a kind of rationality that is particular to the economic, political and moral relations of a society. Perhaps one should draw attention to the analogous "irrational" structures of the rituals performed by the Cargo Clutists of Melanesia. As Peter Worsley points out, cargo cults are expressions of disaffection in a society which finds itself dislocated from traditional bonds. The forms the ceremonies take may appear "irrational". But they are valid embodiments of a sense of deprivation and possess a kind of rationality which can be understood only in terms of the history of the society. See *The Trumpet Shall Sound : A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia*, 2nd ed. (London, 1970), p. 280. Worsley's book is used by Christopher Hill to argue that "reason and, reasonableness, is a social concept" in his essay on the concept of reason during the political and religious debates in the 17th century. See *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), p. 120.

32 For the use of the fragmentary form by the greater Romantic poets see Thomas MacFarland's excellent book *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin : Wordsworth, Coleridge and the Modalities of Fragmentation* (New York, 1981).

33 Review in the *Westminster Review* for October 1824 reprinted by John Carey in his edition of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824 ; rpt. London and New York, 1970), pp. 256-58. Hereafter referred to as *CJS* in the text.

George Saintsbury agrees with the reviewer of the *Westminster Review* and says that because Hogg's novel is not quite typical of his other prose works it is doubtful if "it is entirely his"—*History of Nineteenth Century Literature, 1780-1895* (New York, 1904), p. 100. On the question of authorship, see Louis Simpson, *James Hogg : A Critical Study* (New York, 1962), pp. 192-97. Strout thinks the novel is "badly constructed", *Life and Letters of James Hogg* (Lubbock, Texas, 1966), p. 261. Many modern critics of the novel have, however, praised the structure of the novel. Marius Bewley thinks that the structure is innovative. See his "The Society of the Just", *New Statesman*, 64 (1962) 580-82. See also Walter Allen, *The English Novel : A Short Critical History* (New York, 1955), p. 142 ; and Masao Miyoshi, *The Divided Self : A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians* (New York and London, 1969), pp. 90-95.

34 I should mention here that I am grateful in a variety of unspecifiable ways for parts of this discussion to Edward W. Said's *Beginnings : Intention and Method* (New York, 1975).

35 *New Statesman*, 64 (1962), 580. See also John Carey, "Introduction", to the Oxford edition of *CJS*, p. xlii. In contrast to Bewley's view Robert Kieley says the following : "Hogg challenges one of the basic conventions of fiction :

the major—and, particularly, the painful—events in a life should be reported as though witnessed by a trustworthy observer who can fit each episode into a coherent pattern. Nobody, he unsportingly implies, sees that much of anyone but himself." *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 221.

36 Ed., *Scottish Short Stories, 1800-1900* (London, 1971), pp. 8-9. Also see Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh and London, 1958), pp. 248-49.

37 G.M. Trevelyan on the division in Scotland during the Reformation, quoted by David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People : 1680-1830* (London, 1961), p. 12.

38 This contradicts the opinion of André Gide who thought that Hogg's point of view is given by George Colwan, the rational, commonsensical "representative of normal humanity". "Introduction", *CJS* (New York, 1959), pp. xii-xiii.

39 For a detailed discussion of Hogg's sharply etched histories and folk beliefs of Scottish peasants within specific political and social conditions in his stories and poems, see Chapter II of my work "Shades of the Preternatural", pp. 92-109, dissertation, Kent State University, 1978.

40 Quoted by Craig, *Scottish Literature*, p. 50.

41 This point is adapted from Georg Lukács' discussion about the difference between Enlightenment historians and their ideological bias and the sense of history in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. See "Walter Scott and the Historical Novel", in *Marxism and Human Liberation*, ed. E. San Juan, Jr. (New York, 1973), pp. 134-37.

42 One may note in passing that James Hogg's method of constructing local history anticipates contemporary historical works like *Montaillou* and *The Death of Woman Wang* by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Jonathan Spence respectively, which are woven out of folktales and the records kept in parish registers.

43 It is interesting to note that in most Gothic novels all the rural poor who regard themselves as victims of a morally privileged and 'rationally' structured civil and religious society, seek the aid of magic, witchcraft, bandits or any other source of power which is not associated with 'legitimate' organizations to establish their social identity and to seek redress. For a detailed discussion of the folklore of demonology used by Hogg and other Gothic writers to explore the dark underside of the pastoral myth see Chapter II of my "Shades of the Preternatural", pp. 59-119.

44 I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion : An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 148.

45 See also Hogg's other stories of demonic strangeness like "The Brownie of the Black Hags", "Baill Lee", "Adam Bell", "The Brownie of Bodsbeck" or "Singular Dream".

46 Craig, *Scottish Literature*, p. 258. Craig also does not believe that the novel is structurally and psychologically well realized (p. 196).

47 Apart from Swift and Johnson, a majority of Augustan critics agreed with Burke's evaluation of *Pilgrim's Progress* as "degrading". See Annette T. Rubinstein, *The Great Tradition in English Literature from Shakespeare to Shaw* (New York, 1953), p. 190. The influence of Bunyan's novel on the poor during the course of the industrial revolution is discussed in detail by E.P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 34-38.

48 See for details Thomas Thomson, "Biographical Sketch of the Ettrick Shepherd", in *The Works of the Ettrick Shepherd*, a new edition, I (London, 1866), I, xi-x, xx.

49 One may here note that Hogg's assumptions as a historian of the fabulous are quite contrary to the assertions of the modern structuralists and formalists discussed above.

50 Quoted by Thomson in his "Biographical Sketch", I, xiii.

51 For a fascinating discussion of the relation between the activity of storytelling and the modes of production, see Walter Benjamin's brilliant essay, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov", in *Illuminations*, pp. 83-109.

52 Bonamy Dobree, *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century: 1700-1740*, Oxford History of English Literature (New York and Oxford, 1959), p. 2. Also see Christopher Hill, *The English Revolution 1640: An Essay*, 3rd ed. (London, 1955), pp. 57-61. Hill very correctly says that in 1660 "Charles was called King by the Grace of God, but was really King by the grace of merchants and squires." pp. 57-58.

53 Craig, *Scottish Literature*, p. 12. Craig also argues that Scottish novelists of the period were, in general, "preoccupied with the co-existence of an older, more violent state and the settled modern society" in which they lived (p. 146).

54 James Sutherland, *English Literature in the Late Seventeenth Century*, Oxford History of English Literature (New York and Oxford, 1969), p. 373.

55 Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather: History of Scotland*, III (Boston, 1879), 255-61. Scott describes scenes of torture which he thinks were thought up, not by human beings but by "Satan himself", and adds that it was "The government of this cruel time, applied these ancient and barbarous statutes to the outlawed Presbyterians of the period, and thus drove them altogether from human society." (III, 260)

56 See Hogg's "The Brownie of Bodesbeck".

57 C.V. Wedgwood, *Poetry and Politics under the Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 136.

58 In 1683 Jeffroys presided over the case of the Rye House plotters in which he sent Algernon Sidney, a man whose writings Coleridge admired, to the scaffold on insufficient evidence. See Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 349. Interestingly

enough Sir Walter Scott, perhaps because of his Royalist sympathies does not discuss the case of Algernon Sidney in his *Tales of a Grandfather*.

59 Wedgewood, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

60 Quoted by Thomson, "Biographical Sketch", p. xiv.

61 Wedgewood, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

62 *The Country and the City* (New York, 1973), p. 39.

63 "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law", in *Albion's Fatal Tree : Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, eds. E.P. Thomson et al. (New York, 1975), p. 18.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

65 *The Country and the City*, p. 39.

66 Williams mentions that an Act of 1677 ordered "pensioned paupers to wear a red or blue letter 'p' on their coats ; they were now a category and marked." Further, through the 18th century "Pauper" in parish registers became so frequent that it was shortened to "P". See *ibid.*, p. 86 and p. 104.

67 For brilliant discussions of the use of religious vocabulary to discuss political and economic misery in the 17th century, see Christopher Hill, *Anti-Christ in Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971) ; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971) ; and Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, III, 261-262.

68 In material terms one needs to constantly remind oneself that Robert as the younger brother of George Colwan does not have any rights over the property of the old laird. Part of the novel is concerned with his need to gain control over his father's land.

There is an interesting similarity between the "Editor's" attitude towards Robert's antinomian fantasies and David Hume's essay on superstitions. See "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm", in *Essays : Moral Political and Literary*, ed. T.H. Green and T.G. Grose, I (London, 1882), pp. 144-45.

69 Craig, *Scottish Literature*, p. 37.

70 William Ferguson, *Scotland : 1689 to the Present*, The Edinburgh History of Scotland (New York, 1968), p. 85.

71 T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People : 1560-1830* (New York, 1969), p. 367.

72 Quoted by Smout, p. 367.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

74 Craig, *Scottish Literature*, pp. 38-39.

75 Ferguson, *Scotland*, p. 25.

76 This is in contradiction to the critical tradition for which Hogg's novel explores the nature of the "disharmony in self that causes disharmony in society and in the whole of natural creation"—David Higginbotham, "James Hogg's

Confessions and the Fall into Division", *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 9 (1971-72), 26.

77 See M.H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric", in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York, 1965), pp. 526-80; also see M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York, 1971).

Commenting on Hogg's use of the first-person narrative, David Skilton says that *Confessions* surpasses Godwin's "vivid and concentrated psychological studies"—*The English Novel: Defoe to the Victorians* (London and New York, 1977), p. 77.

78 See Heinrich Zimmer, *The King and the Corpse: Tales of the Soul's Conquest of Evil*, ed. Joseph Campbell, Bollingen Series, XI (Princeton, 1957), pp. 230-33. Also remembered here are such diverse and historically unique lives as those of St John of the Cross, the last visions of the Buddha, the final moments of agony of the Ancient Mariner, and the despair before the irruption of wisdom in countless tales about shamans. In particular, the final temptation of the Buddha which he calmly resists, has a strong resemblance to the gruesome attack on Robert:

As he (Siddhartha) sat there, the demon Mara, king of devils, decided to spoil his meditation. He first sent his three lovely daughters to tempt Siddhartha. Wearing gossamer-silk dresses, their bejewelled anklets tinkling, they danced the most enchanting, alluring, seductive, voluptuous dances. But Siddhartha sat calmly, his mind concentrated, deep in thought.

Mara then attacked him with rain and storm. It hailed and slashed at Siddhartha. Then it appeared to him that a huge army of demons was attacking him, with inhuman cries, some with a thousand mouths, others potbellied and deformed, others drinking blood, all grimacing and laughing horribly. But Siddhartha remained still. The whole day Mara tempted and frightened Siddhartha, but at sundown he admitted defeat.

And then the truth dawned on Siddhartha.

—From *The Dance of Shiva and Other Tales from India*, trans. Oron Ghosh (New York, 1965), pp. 200-01.

79 For an excellent discussion of pilgrimages as sacred journeys towards *communitas*, that sacred condition where one experiences the essential harmony with the Other, see Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca and London, 1974).

80 See Niilo Idman, *Charles Robert Maturin: His Life and Works* (Helsingfors, 1923), pp. 4-5.

81 See M.W. Piper and A. Norman Jeffares, "Maturin the Innovator" *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 21 (1957-58), 261-84. Commenting upon the opening of *Melmoth* the authors say that "There is a steady increase in suspense

achieved in two ways, through the realistic rendering of the peasant character which keeps the imaginative soaring of the story firmly rooted, and through the use of emotive descriptions of nature which set a suitable scene wherein Maturin's brooding eerie imagination could display its power." (p. 282) For them Maturin is one of the earliest writers to synthesize Irish nationalism and Wordsworthian Romanticism (p. 261).

Also see Robert E. Lougy, *Charles Robert Maturin*, The Writers Series (Lewisburg, 1975), p. 84.

82 See Williams, *The Country and the City*, pp. 39, 54, 85-86.

83 *The Irish: A Character Study* (New York, 1956), p. 88.

84 *The Irish*, p. 88.

85 On the confused dating of various incidents see Jack Null, "Structure and Theme in *Melmoth the Wanderer*", *Papers on Language and Literature*, 13 (1977), 136-47.

86 For heroes of consciousness in *Melmoth* see Shirley Clay Scott, "Myths of Consciousness in the Novels of Charles Robert Maturin", Dissertation, Kent State University, 1973.

87 This is contrary to the argument of Philip P. Hallie in *Horror and the Paradox of Cruelty* (Middletown, Conn., 1969). Hallie uses the term *Kairos* borrowed from Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending* to describe the nature of the endings of Gothic novels and their structural relationship to the whole (pp. 25-27). But then, this conception of the Gothic novel is not related to the time of suffering. He says that "the Gothic novelists' power operates in medieval times and faraway lands, not in the everyday streets of London." (p. 25)

89 The reviewer of *Quarterly Review* condemned *Melmoth* as a novel whose "tales are involved and entangled in a clumsy confusion which disgraces the artist, and puzzles the observer", and added that no critic could "presume to talk of beginning or end in such an embroglio", 24 (1820-21), 304-5.

90 I do not believe that Maturin uses multiple narrators deliberately to save himself from "exposing his weakness in the handling of plot" as Douglas Grant thinks—"Introduction", *Melmoth the Wanderer* (London and New York, 1968), p. x. The fact that each narrative is sustained is, I think a testimony to Maturin's power as a storyteller.

91 For a brilliant essay on such a journey towards knowledge in the *real*, lived world in Goethe's *Faust*, and by correlation in most Romantic works, see Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future*, pp. 1-37; also see Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*.

92 The novel is very specific about the quality of this age. For example, Maturin has this to say about the morals of the aristocracy:

The London theatres then presented a spectacle which ought for ever to put to silence the foolish outcry against progressive deterioration of morals, — foolish even from the pen of Juvenal, and still more so from the lips of a modern Puritan. Vice is always nearly on an average: The only

difference in life worth tracing, is that of manners, and there we have manifestly the advantage of our ancestors. Hypocrisy is said to be the homage vice pays to virtue, — decorum is the outward expression of that homage; and if this be so, we must acknowledge that vice has latterly grown very humble indeed. There was, however, something splendid, ostentatious, and obtrusive, in the vices of Charles the Second's reign." (p. 30)

Maturin then goes on to describe the condition of the insane asylums of the age and implies that it is in the infernal and terrifying cries of those who are "mad from politics, religion, ebriety or some perverted passion" (*M*, p. 40) that one can hear the real voices of the age. One may remember here that an insane asylum has often been described as a place of "total control" and as such it objectifies a coercive society. Also see *M*, pp. 19, 37-39, 341-43.

93 I am here using *hierophany* defined by Eliade as "the act of manifestation of the sacred" in *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 11.

94 See, for example, the fragment of the story of Donna Ines told to Stanton by an old woman who gives him shelter from the storm (*M*, pp. 27-29); or, the half told story of the Puritan weaver and the loyalist tailor and the mad woman who lost her child in the Great Fire of London (*M*, pp. 37-39); and, the story within the Spaniard's Tale of the two lovers immured in the labyrinthine vaults of the monastery, told by an evil monk to Moncada (*M*, pp. 158-65).

95 *The Monk* is made up of the story of the story of Ambrosio and Matilda, the tale of Raymond and Agnes, and the story of the "Bleeding Nun" told by the Wandering Jew. That the novel is structured out of a variety of tales was realized by a number of 19th century dramatists who converted each of its episodes into separate plays. For a complete listing of these plays see Summers, *A Gothic Bibliography*.

96 Numerous people have talked about Mrs Radcliffe's novels as pastoral nostalgia. For example see H.N. Fairchild, *The Romantic Quest* (New York, 1931); J.M.S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England: 1770-1800* (1932; rpt. Lincoln, 1961); Devendra P. Verma, *The Gothic Flame* (1957; rpt. New York, 1966); Elizabeth M. Andrews, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York, 1979).

97 There seems to be a similarity between the structural and spatial arrangements of *The Thousand and One Nights* and the sacred and ornamental art of Islamic architecture. For an interesting discussion of the relation between geometric ornaments on a mosque and ritual see Titus Burckhardt, "Perennial Values in Islamic Art", in *The Sword of the Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Tradition, Symbolism*, ed. Jacob Needleman (Baltimore, 1974), pp. 304-16.

THE POEM AS AN EXPANDED METAPHOR

C.T. Indra

It is only appropriate that I start this paper with a reference to the 'ādi kavi' Vālmiki. Was he not the first poet who was also a critic who felt that a great creative artist must also be a sensitive reader? In fact as readers we must remember his introductory remarks to the *Rāmāyaṇa* : "Śokārtasya pravṛtto me śloko bhavatu nānyathā" (Let this, uttered of śoka (lament), be known as śloka, no other), 1.2.18, which alone provide the right perspective to our study of the epic. The epic is a kind of metaphor for the art-emotion which has its birth in the life-emotion, of his witnessing the death of one of the krauncha birds. He not only witnesses the event but is able to detach himself from it and present it in appropriate words which lead him to the epic itself.

An attempt is made in the following pages to study some of the episodes and the whole of the epic as expanding metaphors or objective correlatives of the primary experiences of the individual artists, namely Vālmiki and Kamban. Apart from the space limit there is also the limit set up by my own inadequacy which has prevented me from expanding and developing more fully my responses to the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Vālmiki and Kamban.

The quality of a poem, especially a long narrative poem, depends on the poet's personal qualities, his gift, training, experience and character. It also depends on extra-personal conditions such as the existence of a tradition in the form he practises, on the health of the language at the time he writes. It further depends on the presence or absence, and if presence, then its quality, of the philosophy of life of the age and society in which the poem was composed. The quality also depends on the degree of unconscious assimilation by society of that philosophy into mythology, images, symbols and narrative. It depends too on the degree and quality of the poet's engagement in that philosophy and its mythology and the extent to which he can use it poetically. The reader with the right sensibility discovers it all as does C.S. Lewis or Balachandra Rajan in his study of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. We can recover the meaning of an epic poem only through a recovery, however partial the historical reconstruction may be, of what it meant to the contemporaries.

Take a simple example like the one in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, from

the Bālakāṇḍa. Since Daśaratha after having originally promised to grant whatever Viśvāmitra wanted, is unwilling to send his two sons along with him, Viśvāmitra is angry, but then he is not now the kṣatriya who fought with Vasiṣṭha. He is a brahmarṣi and his anger is not one that destroys. It will, if anything, only purify, and chasten. Here is a picture of the angry sage :

iti narapati jalpanāt dvijendram
 Kuśikasutaṃ sumahān viveśa manyuḥ /
 suhuta iva makhe agnirājyasiktaḥ
 samabhad vad ujjvalito maharṣivahniḥ //

(At these words from the king the illustrious brahmin Kuśika's son was seized with mighty anger. Like sacrificial flames fed well with butter, the great sage did flare up.) 1. 20.28.

It is a happy instance of Vālmiki's marvellous power of using words to evoke in the reader a precise, complex response, to evoke the combination of emotions and associations appropriate to the context. Here are words which are only exquisitely detailed compulsions on a mind willing and able to be so compelled. Viśvāmitra is "maharṣi-vahniḥ" which may be rendered 'maharṣiśreṣṭhaḥ' (the best of maharṣis). True, it means that. But in describing him as "vahniḥ" in a "makha" (sacrifice) Vālmiki has put into the verse a whole world of associations—what C.S. Lewis would call "subterranean virtue" which we do not see in the rendering 'maharṣiśreṣṭha'. "Vahniḥ" is that which carries and conveys our offerings to the proper deities.

Viśvāmitra is the 'vaiśvānara' (of Kaṭhapaniṣad), the bright flame fed by 'samit' and "ājya". He is bright and powerful. He is, however, not destructive. This fire which is "suhuta" (well fed) can only chasten and purify and carry one to real joy. One has only to contrast it with the anger for instance of Rāvaṇa when Sitā refuses to be tempted. Rāvaṇa is described as one fiery and fierce, "jajvāla sahasā kopāt citāstha iva pāvaka" (suddenly blazing out of anger like the fire in a funeral pyre) where the same fire image is used to indicate a reversal of values—frustrated lust destructive of everything.

As with diction so with episodes which may be looked upon as metaphors. The same episode of "yāga samrakṣaṇa" outlines the central theme of the whole epic. What is the nature of the 'pratijñā' that Daśaratha is about to violate in feeling reluctant to send his sons with sage Viśvāmitra? What aspects of a man's character brought

him to violate it ? What are the consequences of the violation or the fulfilment ? The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is just an elaboration of the theme of this minor episode. Daśaratha, in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa, in his fondness for his son which makes him resolve upon the coronation without even informing the near relatives, is in a state of conflict between attachment to his son which brings about the 'kaluṣa' in the will or 'buddhi' and the promise he has given to Kaikeyī. We see the whole drama repeated there. Nobody can advise him in that state. It requires all the resolution of the 'avatāra' to help the sentimental father to keep his 'pratijñā'.

The stories of Bhagiratha and Ahalyā reinforce the secondary themes like parting and reunion of Rāma and Sitā or the sacredness of the duties of piety to one's ancestors. The diction, the similes and metaphors all emphasize the central values of what may be (imperfectly rendered as DUTY) dictated by the law of our own being.

In Vālmiki, there is thus the stress on the value of 'satya' and 'dharma'. The Upaniṣadic seer prays, "satya dharmāya dṛṣṭaye"—for the vision of 'satya' and 'dharma'—a conduct that upholds us and takes us to truth—it may be the description of a city or the nature of a human being—the recurrent words are invariably 'satya' and 'dharma' (the whole of Vibhiṣaṇa's advice to Rāvaṇa, for example). They (the words) make their appearance to remind us of the values and the vision central to the epic.

The Tamil epic poet Kamban, coming long after Vālmiki (while admitting his indebtedness to the earlier poet and paying him the tribute "tevarum paruka-cceytāṇ" (he made it so that even the gods relished it) has tried to transform the epic itself into a vehicle of devotion to the Lord and the need for absolute self-surrender to Him. The leading value of Vālmiki consists in expounding the Vedic and Upaniṣadic concepts of truth and 'dharma' in a language appropriately full of Vedic echoes and the concentration happens to be on the contrast between egoistic self-satisfaction and renunciation of the lower for the higher values (always a matter of choice). On the other hand to the Tamil poet, imbibed in the Vaiṣṇava bhakti cult, the story of Rāma is the story of the human soul's surrender to the all-loving divine. No wonder his diction is full of echoes from Vaiṣṇava poets, especially the poetry of the Alwars.

We shall examine just one episode in detail from the Yuddhakāṇḍa which Kamban uses to reinforce his theme, the soul's self-

giving and surrender to the divine. If Vālmiki's vision reaches into an abstract realm of impersonal truth and 'dharma', Kamban's vision is unmistakably theistic or theocentric. However, as a poet the essentially dramatic genius of Kamban makes him metaphorical: he is almost Shakespearean in his "negative capability". The epic genius of Vālmiki makes him not only a story-teller whose voice is distinctly heard but a commentator and an interpreter of events as well.

The episode in Kamban is that of Hiranya and Prahlāda and the narrator is Vibhīṣaṇa. The context is Vibhīṣaṇa advising his brother Rāvaṇa to recognize the divinity of Rāma and render him back his wife Sitā. Vālmiki in the same context merely makes Vibhīṣaṇa advise Rāvaṇa to give back Sitā in the name of 'dharma'. In the context of *Kambarāmāyaṇa* it is a question of rendering concretely the egoistic impulses working against admitting the divinity of Rāma and surrendering to him. The emphasis falls not so much on Rāvaṇa's desire to possess Sitā as on his arrogance.

Vibhīṣaṇa intends the instance as a shock treatment for his ego-drunk brother. The relationship between Hiranya and Prahlāda is almost identical with the relationship between Rāvaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa. They are brothers only in the sense that they are 'rākṣasas' by birth. But Vibhīṣaṇa like Prahlāda has already not only recognized the divinity of the Lord, but has surrendered to the Lord. He wants his brother to have the same kind of fulfilment which he has experienced by dissolving his ego. The comparison between Hiranya and Rāvaṇa is also appropriate for both of them in their egoistic self-love and self-assertion pray to the Lord for power and immortality and are caught in their own evils.

The story of Hiranya may be viewed as an "expanded metaphor" (to use George Wilson Knight's terminology) anticipating the death and destruction of Rāvaṇa, the acceptance of Vibhīṣaṇa by Rāma and his getting crowned by the Lord. This episode has been looked upon by some scholars as an interpolation. However orthodox scholars, ranging from the intuitive interpreter P. Sri Acharya to the textual expert V.M. Gopalakrishnamachari have demonstrated the authenticity of the episode. Structurally it illustrates Kamban's genius in exploiting not only the narrative possibilities of a story but also making them metaphorically and thematically relevant.

V.M. Gopalakrishnamachari in his erudite Introduction to the *Yuddhakāvya* refers to a popular legend regarding Kamban's

introduction of this epieode in the epic. It appears the poet was offering the epic to the academy of scholars in the Thousand Pillared hall at Srirangam Temple when some of the pundits present felt uneasy about the 'deviation' from the 'Ādi Kāvya'. i.e. Vālmiki, in Kamban inserting Hiranya's story before Vibhīṣaṇa's 'defection' to Rāma's camp. The pundits found it novel and demanded that the poet prove it as acceptable to the divine. Nothing short of a miracle could meet such a demand. The poet however in the spirit of devotion, went on with the recital. And lo! the Lord Himself greeted it with superhuman laughter and thereby seemed to give it the divine seal of authenticity. It is interesting to note that the Lord is supposed to have roared like a lion listening to the story of Hiranya, much to the wonder of the pundits and the lay audience/readers.

Our interest is in the aesthetic warrant for and the organicistic relevance of the deviation Kamban makes in inserting the story at this point. A close analysis will reveal the dramatic import of the episode. It becomes a metaphor for the inevitable dissolution of ego and the need for 'śaraṇāgati'.

The poet first builds up the personality of the demonic Hiranya with meticulous care. In ancient Indian literature and legends an asura or rākṣasa is never a vulgar, farcical reduction into grotesque qualities. An asura may command the elements, nay even the gods. He is deeply learned in scriptures. He is invariably luminous and awesome. He is invincible. Hiranya is all this. In fact, he is almost omniscient and omnipotent or at least appears so. However, the poet implies that all this might is after all in vain unless offered in the service of a power higher than itself. Hiranya, alas, wants himself to be the centre of the universe. Everyone should utter his name as the 'mantra' rather than the Lord's. There cannot be a subtler metaphorical mode of depicting egoism. P. Sri Acharya remarks on the parallelism between Hiranya and Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa must have been evidently lost in admiration for the audacity and might of Hiranya and identified himself so completely that there is not a single interruption by Rāvaṇa in the course of the narration. Ironically such a response is the very opposite of Vibhīṣaṇa's intention which was to impress upon his brother the futility of scholarship and prowess as opposed to surrender and self-consecration.

Juxtaposed with this portrait is the pious image of Prahlāda, son

of an asura but with a heart and soul of a devotee, who will not be intimidated by vain human power, be it that of his own father. Kamban echoes Tiruvalluvar's conception of the brahmin—'anthanar'—which fits more Prahlāda and (even) Vibhīṣaṇa rather than the practical minded brahmin guru (who merely wants to survive) whom Hiranya employs to instruct his son. (Later in "Vibhīṣaṇa Adaikala Padalam" Kamban openly describes Vibhīṣaṇa thus : "marai odadu odi nani uyarndhavan ; medhavikatellam melana menmaiyan"—that Vibhīṣaṇa who had studied the Vedas by himself without any formal instruction was more pious and spiritual than the brahmins who have only punditry to their credit. Kamban dwells on the immaculate purity and humility of the young asura Prahlāda and incarnates in him the Vaiṣṇava doctrine of 'prapatti'. It is his faith which makes Prahlāda in reality invincible, though weak and helpless he may be in front of his father's dire ire. Indeed Kamban's dramatic genius works at high pitch in creating this paradox.

The best part of the stanzas describing the hideous tortures to which Prahlāda is subject (beginning with Stanza 80) is that every mode of torture is not only nullified, made ineffectual, but points to a transfiguration or transvaluation of frail human powers and faculties which absolute surrender can bring about. 'Prapatti' alone can quell 'ahaṃkāra'. The demonstration of meek piety incites Hiranya's ego the more. Prahlāda asserts the immanence of the Lord in every created object great or small : "Saninum ulan ; or thanmai anuvinaṁ sadakuritta koninum ulan ; ma meru kunrinum ulan ; inninra thunilum ulan ; ni sonna sollilum ulan." (St 124 : He is present in the span of a hand ; He is present in the millionth part of an atom ; He is present in the great mountain of Meru ; He is present in this pillar ; He is present even in your words.) This very act of faith ironically goads further his father's heady arrogance. The ruthless father threatens to tear apart his son and drink his blood if he fails to prove his claim. (St 125) Kamban suggests at this point, how unconsciously Hiranya anticipates his own end, particularly the manner of it, at the hands of the Lord Narasimha. His threat will boomerang upon himself very soon.

Once again in the revelation scene to which not less than half a dozen stanzas (Sts 130 ff) are devoted, the poet employs parallelism. The lion-headed Lord strides the universe with a fierce awesome demonstration of his prowess. The reader recalls the way the poet

had earlier built up the awe-inspiring image of Hiraṇya himself. However, this surface parallelism turns out to be a contrast since the Lord assumes this terrible form in order to destroy Evil. It ends in a direct confrontation between the divine and the demonic asura anticipating the encounter between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, later in the field of Laṅkā. The dreadful end of Hiraṇya is a foreshadowing of that of Rāvaṇa.

The similarity of predicament can hardly be ignored between the two asuras. For both of them in their egoistic self-love had propitiated the gods and got such boons as would make them apparently invincible and immortal. Hiraṇya had sought for an immortality whereby he would be killed neither by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, the Lords in their own forms (person), nor by any human being, neither in heaven nor on earth, neither inside his house nor outside, neither in the day nor in the night. (Sts 14-17) Thus he would defy Yama himself. Rāvaṇa however had been less careful, and prayed to be saved from death from any being other than human since he thinks so contemptuously of human power. In both the stipulations, there is a sad underestimation of the power of the divine, to keep the ethical code intact and yet re-establish 'dharma'. The Lord outwits Hiraṇya—note the Lord is so often called a "māyin" by the poet implying mystery, echoing the Pasurams of the devout Alwars—by taking a lion's form and rips open his stomach with his nails and not with any weapon, at the threshold of his palace and at dusk. Kamban dramatizes the awesome demonstration of divine strategy and forecasts the doom to which Rāvaṇa is bound to come. For has he not dismissed Rāma and his monkey force with less than scorn? He had asked Vibhiṣaṇa just in the previous canto: "Yen peruvīralai kochai manudar velguvar yenranai." (Rāvaṇa Mandiradapalam, St 101: You said these puny human beings would overcome my great might.) We are prepared for the downfall of Rāvaṇa.

However, given the theocentric and doctrinal framework of *Kamharāmāyaṇam*, the emphasis is on the possibility of redemption or 'mokṣa' (often called in Tamil bhakti literature "tatuttu āṭkoḷḷal" i.e. the divine interference retrieving an erring soul). This is clearly suggested early in the canto through Prahlāda's affirmation in St 25. Prahlāda assuages the fears of his 'guru' that Hiraṇya might punish him for failing to prevail upon his son to utter his name, by saying that the Lord's mercy is greater than anything that we could con-

ceive of and assures him that Lord Nārāyaṇa has already salvaged their souls, including that of his father and the coward of a guru through Prahlāda uttering the Lord's name :

"Yennai uyvithen ; yendaiyai uyvithen ; inaiya
unnai uyvithu ivvulagaiyum uyvippan amaindu
munnai vedathin mudal peyar mozhivadu mozhinden
yennai kuttram nan iyambiyadu ? iyambudhi" yenran (St 25)

(He said, "I have redeemed myself and my father as well. To redeem you and this world I have uttered the prime name mentioned in the Vedas. What sin have I committed by uttering it ? Please tell me.")

The spirit of utter surrender and the affirmation of faith which Prahlāda exhibits in yet another stanza (19) provides an antithesis to the abominable ego of the father as witnessed in several verses. In Stanza 23 Prahlāda is a perfect image of bhakti whereas in Stanza 119, we have a view of the blinding vanity of Hiraṇya.

The canto ends in the Lord accepting Prahlāda's unalloyed, uncompromising bhakti. As P. Sri Acharya incisively observes, Prahlāda wanted to be the slave of the Lord but is at the end crowned. Similarly Vibhīṣaṇa who did not even think about the kingdom, is finally crowned. In fact, after listening to Hiraṇya's story, Rāvaṇa accuses his brother of insidious design upon the crown :

Pazhisal Iranyan pudalvan panbu yena
suzhvinai mutri, yan avarkatku thotriyapin
yezhai ni yen perunchelvam yeydi, pin
vazhavo karuthu ? adu varavetru agumo ?

(Vibhīṣaṇa Adikala Padalam, St 4)

(Like Prahlāda, the son of mighty Hiraṇya, do you, poor one, plan to live after obtaining my great wealth when, through bad luck, I am defeated ? Is it going to be fulfilled ?)

This, we know, is far from Vibhīṣaṇa's intention. But the eventual resolution of the situation is a paradox. The transformation he wanted his brother to achieve does not take place. Similarly he never thought of ascending the throne, but at the end he does. When he renounces he enjoys.

The episode of Hiraṇya can thus be looked upon as an objective correlative of the emotions and feelings Kamban wants to embody in his epic. In fact, the whole story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be viewed as an experience of the voluntary self-giving or surrender, that sub-

mission and devotion to the divine which dissolves the separative consciousness. When Rāma embraces Guhan, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa as his own blood brothers, they experience that fulfilment. Demonstrating how an apparently 'modern' theory like "objective correlative" is reminiscent of the Romantic's conception of poetry as self-expression, M.H. Abrams incisively observes: "the poetry is not in the object itself, but in the state of mind in which it is contemplated ... Thus severed from the external world, the objects signified by a poem tend to be regarded as no more than a projected equivalent—an extended and articulated symbol—for the poet's inner state of mind." A.J. Whaler in his monumental essay on the Miltonic simile examines the function of the epic simile. The simile serves many purposes. It may illustrate an idea. It often helps the reader 'to realize' the character, to anticipate a turn of event; what is more it generates atmosphere in addition to offering relief to the reader. In the hands of an essentially dramatic poet like Kamban, it tends to become an expanded metaphor. The episode of Hiranya enlarges itself into an analogue and becomes a metaphor, gets merged into the story and ceases to be a mere illustration. As Philip Wheelright points out talking of metaphor, "The dichotomies of *objective* and *subjective*, physical and spiritual, *particular* and the *universal* disappear. The *plus* value of poetic expression causes each term to participate into its opposite to metamorphose into it." Owen Barfield, expounding Coleridge's idea on metaphor says that it becomes a symbol where the vehicle-tenor dichotomy reaches the vanishing point and is dissolved in something greater than either and leads us to that awareness (*Nous* or Higher Reason) which is the very essence of creative imagination.

NOTES

I owe the inspiration and the perspective of this paper to my teacher, Professor V.S. Seturaman. I am particularly indebted to him for allowing me to use his two papers on Vālmīki and metaphor. I used the following books and articles in preparing this paper :

- 2 "Yuddhakāṇḍam", *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam*, Vol. 7, ed. V.M. Gopalakrishnamacharya. V.M.G. & Co, Madras, 1956.
- 3 P. Sri Acharya, "Chitra Rāmāyaṇa", a serial in *Anandavikatan* (1955).
- 4 A.J. Whaler, "Milton's Epic Simile", *PMLA* (1951).
- 5 G. Wilson Knight, "On Interpretation", *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. III.
- 6 V.S. Seturaman, "A Reading of Valmiki", *Mother India* (1966).
- 7 V.S. Seturaman, "Some Aspects of Metaphor", *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Vol. VI (1984).
- 8 Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*. Oxford University Press, London, 1972.
- 9 M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Oxford University Press, London, 1976, paperback edition.

EPIC WOMEN

Maeve Hughes IBVM

Ancient epic poetry focuses mainly on heroes—the anger of Achilles, the journeyings of Odysseus, the call and mission of Aeneas, the valour and tragic betrayal of Siegfried and Roland, the dilemma of Tristan. There are incomparable warriors capable of feats possible only to God-like beings, perhaps the gods themselves: Bhīma, Arjuna, Beowulf, Cúchulainn come instantly to mind. But behind many of these heroes, goading them into action, inspiring them to heroic deeds or taunting them bitterly till they launch wars or combats of tragic and devastating dimensions, are women. The anger of Achilles, his withdrawal from the fight and the dire consequences for the Greek heroes centred on two captured girls—Chryseis, Agamemnon's prize, whom he had to surrender to save his men from the vengeful wrath of the gods, and Briseis, Achilles' bedmate, whom the king demanded as a compensation and substitute. And what was the Trojan war with its terrible slaughter of the "flower of chivalry" all about if legend be believed?—the 'theft' of Helen—the beautiful, frivolous, almost certainly unfaithful Helen who left her warrior husband-king for a handsome, fresh-faced Paris.

In the case of Odysseus, it was the memory and the peril of Penelope that kept his face set towards Ithaca despite the promise of immortal youth held out by Calypso, the devouring songs of the Sirens, the magic wand of Circe and the caring charm of the gently Nausicaa. Penelope is the lode-star in his life, whose memory brings him home, not, however, to an immediately peaceful hearth, but to a battle of wits and a bloody slaughter of the suitors who had been devouring his estate and wooing his wife. Had there been no web-weaving Penelope, no lonely woman worn with love-longing that made her the target of the hungry suitors, there would have been no Homeric *Odyssey*. We might have had a suitable B.C. version of "when Lil's husband got demobbed ... think of poor Albert ... Goodnight. Goodnight."

The frivolity of the bored Helen is ultimately responsible for the death of Patroclus and Achilles, of Priam and Hector and countless other warriors of gigantic stature. The sequence of tragic events that follow her elopement eventually compass the death of Agamemnon at the hands of another treacherous woman and the whole

complex of the Oresteian tragedy. The golden apple that Aphrodite held out is as deadly in its consequences as the one that Eve plucked in Eden at the instigation of an eloquent serpent. Mankind is the loser. 'Vanity of vanities' indeed.

Stesichorus would have us believe that Helen never went to Troy, that Paris carried off a mere phantom of this beautiful woman to his ancient city ! Several modern scripture scholars dismiss the story of Eve and the serpent as a fairy-tale. Yet these myths remain at the heart of human experience as much as at the heart of story-telling. Perhaps the debunkers begrudge women such an aura of influence, be it for good or evil, and would put them 'in their place' among the cooking pots and the cradles, forgetting that the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world—perhaps rocks the word as well.

For Aeneas Dido is a temptress, a pleasant interlude on a perilous journey. But she is more ; she is the touchstone—of fire, if you like—which tests his sense not merely of duty but of destiny. Aeneas has to choose between Dido and the new Troy ; between human desire and the fulfilment of a divine mission. Dido uses no magic wand to turn him into a pip and hold him captive in the new city of her design. Indeed she offers to share Carthage with the Trojans. What a temptation for Aeneas to see here his second Troy and find a fit mate in the competent, intelligent, widowed Dido ! She gives him all that woman can give, then he slinks away in the dark and in the morning "the father of Rome, looking back with remorseful eyes from his fleeing ship, saw the flames of her pyre reddening the dawn." (Mary C. Sturgeon : *Women of the Classics*) But Aeneas and his Trojan-Romans never escaped the dire curse of the dying foundress of Carthage.

Siegfried wins the love of Kriemhild that lasts till death and beyond. He also stirs the passion of Brünhild who hates him even unto death. The dragon-slayer, the horny-skinned fabled warrior lets himself get entangled by Gunther in a web of deceit, while he waits to win the fair Kriemhild. Their years in the Netherlands read like a fairy-tale come true, but Brünhild's old passion and envy bring them back under false pretences to Worms, to tragedy, to a bitter hatred in the heart of Kriemhild that has few parallels in literature or history. If Brünhild is the hell-fury of "a woman scorn'd" then Kriemhild, in the lengths to which she goes so many years later to

avenge Siegfried's death at the cost of every family tie, bears out Congreve only too well—"Heaven has no rage like a love to hate turned." The love that cherished and mourned Siegfried, transmuted to a deadly hatred of Hagen turns marriage to Etzel, the honour-pledge of Rüdiger, the love of her younger brothers, the very life of her child into a brutal holocaust that reminds one of the massacre on the field of Kurukṣetra.

There in the horrendous slaughter of the *Mahābhārata* another woman's thirst for vengeance is slaked with the blood of a hundred brothers and countless grandsires and grandsons. Gāndhārī, Kuntī, Draupadī all merit the title *vīranārī*—warrior-women. They would tolerate nothing less than valour and heroism on the part of their husbands. They were women, too, with a great sense of dignity and self-respect and when their honour was touched they were implacable in their demand for justice, nay, insatiable in their thirst for revenge. Life-bearers, life-nurturers, they can and do demand human sacrifice on the field of battle in atonement for the attempt to desecrate womanhood. No wonder is it that Kālī wears a garland of skulls. The Indian woman in her home, as cherisher of the family, as educator of her children and help-mate of her husband is Lakṣmī, but when these are threatened she is Mahādevī too.

The medieval French *Chanson de Roland* is one of the few epic works that have no woman character of distinction. It is a poem about male friendship, about loyalty, patriotism and treachery. It stands virtually alone in its indifference to women. This fact may be due to the towering figure of Charlemagne and the vigour of the campaigns he waged against all that threatened the Great Lady of his age—the Christian Church. It ensures, at any rate, a date clearly prior to the emergence of the French romances and the troubadours for the extant text of the *Chanson*. It is so much a "man's poem" that one wonders if its final shape is the work of a woman! The other works under review are the work of men. No one has ever suggested that Homer or Virgil were women or that the gods handed down the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* or the *Nibelungenlied* to a woman. But the critics have yet to discover the hand that shaped the story of Roland's betrayal by Ganélon. Bédier suggests a 'jongleur' while Jan de Vries seems to see a monastic hand holding the quill. There were monasteries of women as well as communities of monks in early medieval Europe, following

the tradition that the Irish peregrini brought to the continent. But to return to the vitality and vivid portrayal of the women characters in heroic literature, we have only to look at Shakespeare's heroines to understand how the male poet puts his best creative imagination to work as he portrays the gaiety of Portia of Belmont, the innocence of Desdemona, the filial loyalty of Cordelia or on the other hand the blood-curdling cruelty and tragic shattering of Lady Macbeth. It is virtually a platitude to claim that his women characters are more dynamic, more convincing than many of his male personae. Could I, perhaps, challenge myself here by asking whether this phenomenon was in any way related to the fact that all Shakespeare's ladies were originally young boys and that he wrote his lines for living actors? I prefer to hold that artists portray characters of the opposite sex more 'livingly' than those of their own and leave it to psychologists to answer the question: why? That brings me back to some justification of the unusual claim that a female eye may have conceived the lineaments of the knights who perished at Roncevaux.

This very cursory glance at women characters in ancient India, Greece, Germany and France takes note of one salient feature that impressed the story-teller whatever his specific appellation or social or professional rank. Their women heroic figures are powerful characters, possessed of strong principles, loyal, determined, enduring, but singularly unforgiving and vengeful. I would like to turn a more searching gaze on two of these women: Draupadī, already mentioned, and Deirdre from the Gaelic tradition.

Deirdre and Draupadī—the names fall on the ear with a certain similarity of assonances, sounds that might suggest some remote philological relationship. Deirdre and Draupadī are two beautiful women, born in unusual circumstances; each selects her own husband, to the dismay of other worthy-seeming suitors, and then finds herself in a polyandric situation. Draupadī becomes, literally, a pawn in a game between two royal adversaries and has to spend long years in exile with her husbands. Deirdre is a pawn in a different kind of struggle where a king breaks his word and leaves her widowed after her return from years of exile. The insult offered Draupadī is a major factor in the devastating *Mahābhārata* war. The betrayal of Deirdre and the sons of Ulster makes enemies in his own household for the treacherous Conchobar and is certainly one of the

contributory causes of the war that follows the *Táin Bo Cuailgne* (the Cattle Raid of Cooley).

At such a superficial glance one might suspect that the Deirdre story on the western fringe of the Indo-European world was an echo, a descendant perhaps, some thousand years later, of the vigorous stock of the *Mahābhārata* at the eastern heart and source of Indo-European culture and mythology. That Deirdre might prove to be a 'throw-back' to Draupadī does not seem impossible on the strength—or weakness—of the parallels just mentioned. That the story may have crossed from India to the Mediterranean and travelled, like the Celts themselves, across Europe to the then western limits of human settlement, is not beyond the realm of the possible. Man was a nomad before he paused to till the soil and build a shelter while he waited for the harvest. Travellers' tales have not lost their hold even on the modern imagination and may well account for the appearance of comparable figures and themes in the folk tales of far distant races and civilizations.

However, the resemblances so far mentioned are at best superficial. There are differences that go deeper far. The story of Deirdre is one of the many *rém-scéala* (prefatory stories) of the *Táin Bo Cuailgne*, itself the nearest approach in Celtic literature to an epic opus. Each of these 'pre-stories' is linked to some event in the *Táin*, providing in a more or less self-contained story an explanation necessary to understand the event. This prevents long diversions in the course of the main narrative, diversions such as abound in the *Mahābhārata*, where the connecting of tales to one another in a kind of chain-link system proves both fascinating and frustrating to the reader, and must have delighted live audiences.

The Deirdre story, or to give it its full title—"The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu", is one such explanatory device, accounting for the presence of Fergus, one-time King of Ulster and half-brother of the reigning Conchubar, at the court of Medb and Ailill in Connachta, and so obliged to fight his fellow Ulidians in the *Táin* conflict. But this tale is more than an artistic substitute for a footnote. It is a gem of a story, polished and refined to a degree not found in any of the other *rém-scéala*. Nora Chadwick claims that the earliest version dates back to the 8th century. Alwyn and Brinsley Rees mention a recension a thousand years old. How long it existed in the oral tradition is a question that cannot be answered. The destruction of

the tradition that the Irish peregrini brought to the continent. But to return to the vitality and vivid portrayal of the women characters in heroic literature, we have only to look at Shakespeare's heroines to understand how the male poet puts his best creative imagination to work as he portrays the gaiety of Portia of Belmont, the innocence of Desdemona, the filial loyalty of Cordelia or on the other hand the blood-curdling cruelty and tragic shattering of Lady Macbeth. It is virtually a platitude to claim that his women characters are more dynamic, more convincing than many of his male personae. Could I, perhaps, challenge myself here by asking whether this phenomenon was in any way related to the fact that all Shakespeare's ladies were originally young boys and that he wrote his lines for living actors? I prefer to hold that artists portray characters of the opposite sex more 'livingly' than those of their own and leave it to psychologists to answer the question: why? That brings me back to some justification of the unusual claim that a female eye may have conceived the lineaments of the knights who perished at Roncevaux.

This very cursory glance at women characters in ancient India, Greece, Germany and France takes note of one salient feature that impressed the story-teller whatever his specific appellation or social or professional rank. Their women heroic figures are powerful characters, possessed of strong principles, loyal, determined, enduring, but singularly unforgiving and vengeful. I would like to turn a more searching gaze on two of these women: Draupadi, already mentioned, and Deirdre from the Gaelic tradition.

Deirdre and Draupadi—the names fall on the ear with a certain similarity of assonances, sounds that might suggest some remote philological relationship. Deirdre and Draupadi are two beautiful women, born in unusual circumstances; each selects her own husband, to the dismay of other worthy-seeming suitors, and then finds herself in a polyandric situation. Draupadi becomes, literally, a pawn in a game between two royal adversaries and has to spend long years in exile with her husbands. Deirdre is a pawn in a different kind of struggle where a king breaks his word and leaves her widowed after her return from years of exile. The insult offered Draupadi is a major factor in the devastating *Mahābhārata* war. The betrayal of Deirdre and the sons of Uisliu makes enemies in his own household for the treacherous Conchobar and is certainly one of the

contributory causes of the war that follows the *Táin Bo Cuailgne* (the Cattle Raid of Cooley).

At such a superficial glance one might suspect that the Deirdre story on the western fringe of the Indo-European world was an echo, a descendant perhaps, some thousand years later, of the vigorous stock of the *Mahābhārata* at the eastern heart and source of Indo-European culture and mythology. That Deirdre might prove to be a 'throw-back' to Draupadī does not seem impossible on the strength—or weakness—of the parallels just mentioned. That the story may have crossed from India to the Mediterranean and travelled, like the Celts themselves, across Europe to the then western limits of human settlement, is not beyond the realm of the possible. Man was a nomad before he paused to till the soil and build a shelter while he waited for the harvest. Travellers' tales have not lost their hold even on the modern imagination and may well account for the appearance of comparable figures and themes in the folk tales of far distant races and civilizations.

However, the resemblances so far mentioned are at best superficial. There are differences that go deeper far. The story of Deirdre is one of the many *rém-scéala* (prefatory stories) of the *Táin Bo Cuailgne*, itself the nearest approach in Celtic literature to an epic opus. Each of these 'pre-stories' is linked to some event in the *Tain*, providing in a more or less self-contained story an explanation necessary to understand the event. This prevents long diversions in the course of the main narrative, diversions such as abound in the *Mahābhārata*, where the connecting of tales to one another in a kind of chain-link system proves both fascinating and frustrating to the reader, and must have delighted live audiences.

The Deirdre story, or to give it its full title—"The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu", is one such explanatory device, accounting for the presence of Fergus, one-time King of Ulster and half-brother of the reigning Conchubar, at the court of Medb and Ailill in Connachta, and so obliged to fight his fellow Ulidians in the *Táin* conflict. But this tale is more than an artistic substitute for a footnote. It is a gem of a story, polished and refined to a degree not found in any of the other *rém-scéala*. Nora Chadwick claims that the earliest version dates back to the 8th century. Alwyn and Brinsley Rees mention a recension a thousand years old. How long it existed in the oral tradition is a question that cannot be answered. The destruction of

the earliest Gaelic manuscripts during 9th and 10th century raids from the northern seas has made the task of tracing the origins of this touching tale of love, chivalry and treachery impossible. Professor Prionsias Mac Cana believes that its composition is of a later date than the *Táin* and most of its garland of 'pre-stories'. He also claims that it is the work of a single author of exceptional literary merit.

Draupadī, in striking contrast, is a key figure in the elaborate narrative pattern of the vast *Mahābhārata*. Once she emerges from the sacrificial fires of a yajña in response to Drupada's long-tested prayer for progeny, Kṛṣṇā eclipses, to a considerable extent, her twin brother, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, and fills the centre of the stage to the last chapters of the epic. At her svayamvara all eyes are focussed on her. When Arjuna brings her home as his bride and calls out to his mother that he has brought a treasure, Kuntī, unaware of the nature of the treasure, directs her son to share "it" with his brothers; in this she is but the instrument fulfilling a promise made by Mahādeva himself to the beautiful, unmarried daughter of a ṛṣi that in a later birth she would have five husbands. When Yudhiṣṭhira gambles with Duryodhana's champion gambler, Śakuni, and loses his kingdom, his brothers, himself and his wife, Draupadī, it is this last loss with the insults that follow, which leads irrevocably to the wars and holocaust of the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas. Draupadī will never forget, never forgive the personal violence that she suffers at the hands of the victors. She will never allow Bhīma to forget his angry oath to break Duryodhana's thigh and drink the blood of Duṣṣāsana. The long years of exile in the forest with the five brothers, the hardships and deprivations, the year of anonymity with its risks and successes, do nothing to soften Draupadī's bitter hatred, nothing to mollify the intensity of her desire for revenge. The traditionally purifying spiritual effect of the forest experience is missing in her case. On the contrary, it seems to have fed the flames of her hatred, to have confirmed her in her determination to have vengeance at any cost. In this she resembles Kriemhild, who for a similar period of thirteen years, mourned Siegfried unceasingly, nurturing in her heart the while, an unwavering resolution to be avenged on Hagen. It is only Rüdiger's sworn oath to avenge all that she had suffered which persuaded her to accept King Etzel's offer of marriage. Kriemhild's marriage of convenience, made for the sole purpose of becoming powerful enough to destroy Hagen and all who supported him, is

perhaps an extreme example of the deadliness of feminine hatred. Yet Draupadi's determination to assert her personal claim to dignity and respect when none of her husbands had acted to defend her, may seem more self-centred than Kriemhild's vow to slay her husband's murderer. The outcome in both cases is not only the total destruction of the enemy, but the decimation of the flower of knighthood and valour, ancient or medieval. Fathers, husbands, brothers, sons are massacred mercilessly to appease the anger, to satisfy the thirst for vengeance of Draupadi and Kriemhild. The gory details of battle, the counting of heads in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Nibelungenlied* evince comparable levels of satisfaction, even delight in the macabre rites of death on the battlefield. *The Táin Bo Cuailgne* has similar scenes, but it is men who revel in bloodshed, warriors and a warrior queen, Medb, who claims to "thrive on all kinds of trouble".

To return to Draupadi's thirst for revenge and the consequent slaughter, it is necessary to recall the divine prophecy at the time of her extraordinary birth: "This best of all women, this Kṛṣṇā, will bring about the destruction of the kṣatriyas and become the terror of the Kurus." She was the chosen instrument of the gods then, and there can be no doubt that she fulfilled her destiny.

Perhaps the deepest level of similarity with Deirdre lies in this fated role. For just before the birth of Fedlimid Mac Daill's child, his wife was waiting on their guests when the unborn babe screamed in the mother's womb. The seer Cathbad, who was present, foretold the birth of a daughter to be named Deirdriu:

A woman with twisted yellow tresses,
Green-irised eyes of great beauty ...
Ulster's chariot warriors
will deal many a blow for her.

But the seer continued:

Much damage, Deirdriu, will follow
Your high fame and fair visage:
Ulster in your time tormented ...
the three sons of Uisliu exiled ...
Harsh hideous deeds done
in anger at Ulster's high king,
and little graves everywhere
—a famous tale, Deirdriu.

The guests present suggested that this child of woe be killed at

once, reminding us not only of Oedipus but also of Duryodhana. But King Conchobar intervenes, saving Deirdriu, whose name signifies sorrow, to be his own bride in years to come. Like many another character in ancient literature, he seeks to circumvent the dire prophecy, not only by the proposed marriage, but by having the child brought up in a secret isolated spot by foster-parents with a woman-satirist, Leborcham, as her guardian ! There is no word of explanation of this strange choice of mentor for the beautiful child growing into womanhood in a veritable 'vanavāsa' lasting probably somewhat longer than Draupadi's forest exile. It was a lonelier life-style too, with her simple foster-parents and the ageless-ancient Leborcham for company. It is Synge who has Conchobar visit her regularly and his instinct may be right, but on this point the ancient tale is silent. Perhaps it was this lonely childhood that touched some spring of compassion or mischief in Leborcham when Deirdre's sight of a raven drinking the blood of a freshly slain calf on the snow-covered ground evoked the wistful longing : "I could desire a man who has those three colours there : Hair like the raven, cheeks like blood and his body like snow."

The ancient woman mentions that this dream-lover is close at hand in the person of Naoise and the close-laid schemes of Conchobar begin to come apart.

Deirdre's choice of Naoise as her husband is simple, direct, almost violent when compared with the pageantry and splendour of Draupadi's svayamvara. In *The Backward Look* Frank O'Connor describes it in terms of a Texan cowboy-cowgirl encounter which strikes one as being rather offensive until one realizes that the *Táin* is a story about a war fought to gain possession of a bull ! At any rate, Naoise rejects Deirdre's first proposal for he is one of the Red Branch Knights, Conchobar's 'commando' group, and he knows that she is betrothed to the king. But, grabbing his two ears, Deirdre places him under *geasa* (an ancient form of binding another to a particular action or restraint) : "'You will do it,' she said, binding him."

Not even his appeal in warning alarm to Cathbad's prophecy carries any weight. And when he summons his brothers, Ardan and Anle, they agree that go he must, though "evil will come of it." "They left that night, with three times fifty warriors and three times fifty women and the name of hounds and menials."

For Deirdre and the sons of Ulaliu, homeless wandering, with

Conchobar in pursuit, leads eventually to exile across the seas. A spell of sylvan, romantic happiness is threatened by the demand of the King of Alba for Deirdre's hand and followed by further flight. Conchobar eventually, on advice of his knights, pardons them and invites them back to Ulster. His half-brother, Fergus, and his son, Cormac, are the bearers of his pledge. But once back on Irish soil, the three brothers are treacherously slain and Deirdre, her hands bound behind her, is led—dragged by her yellow hair, perhaps?—to Conchobar's side. In this game of dice, it would seem that the king has won, that Deirdre who tricked both Conchobar and Naoise, has now been tricked in turn. But Fergus has yet to be reckoned with. In his physical prowess he is not unlike Bhīma, and he is just as easily beguiled. But his anger has something of the same quality as the mace-bearer's and soon Conchobar's palace is in flames and three hundred warriors lie dead—the choicest of the Red Branch Knights. Cathbad's prophecy has indeed come true. Battle cries, bloodshed, flames leaping in the night-sky, a miniature Troy, a microscopic Kurukṣetra—and all for the sake of a woman, betrayed, degraded, held in bondage of body, mind and heart. The destruction of the warrior 'caste'—Celtic, Greek, Trojan, Indian is accomplished in greater or lesser degree. Etzel's palace in Hungary is another scene of devastation with the knights of Burgundy and 'Hunland' slain to a man because Kriemhild would be avenged.

Deirdre, unlike Draupadi and Kriemhild, neither urges peace-seeking princes to battle, nor contrives conflict. She is handed over to Conchobar and for the year that she spends with him, "She never gave one smile, nor took enough food or sleep, nor lifted up her head from her knees." She constantly lamented the death of Naoise and his brothers, recalling her love for her husband and mourning him in touching verses.

Small comfort Conchobar could have had of her, and her constant declarations of hatred finally drive him to ask: "What do you see that you hate most?" and the answer comes in a flash: "You, of course, and Eogan Mac Durthacht!" who had actually slain the sons of Uisliu. Conchobar devises a penalty even more degrading than that inflicted on Draupadi: "Go and live for a year with Eogan then."

This conversation takes place during a chariot drive with Deirdre seated between the two men she hates most. She will endure no more.

Swift as thought she springs from the chariot and dashes her head against a rock. Some versions of the tale have it that this rock marked the burial place of Naoise.

Deirdre's place in literature is that of a tragic heroine, a bone of contention between rival lovers, the cause of conflict—personal and public—and of death. Because of Conchober's treachery Fergus harries Ulster for sixteen years, first within its boundaries and later in exile in Connachta in the army of Queen Medb. Deirdre is not presented as a mother ; she has no son whose death on the battlefield will wring her heart : no son to live for with hope for the future when Naoise dies, no ties at all to hold her to life on earth and so she is one of the few suicides in heroic literature. Dido is the other memorable instance that comes to mind. Women with no bonds of love to give them strength to suffer or hope for the future. Their husbands dead they have no further duties, no dharma to live by. Draupadī, on the other hand, is a mother and even though she leaves her little son with Subhadrā when she sets out with the Pāṇḍavas into exile, her love for her child does not fade. Kriemhild, after Siegfried's death, allows her son, Gunther, to live with his grandfather, Siegmund. The bloodfest that ultimately avenges the death of her first husband involves the slaughter of her second son, Ortlieb, as Kurukṣetra claims the life of Draupadī's five sons. The destined destruction of the kṣatriyas makes no allowances for ties of blood. Fate has no pity for a mother's tears. Fate has no pity. And Nemesis is a woman, the divine personification of the righteous indignation of the gods at human presumption.

Although the ancient Irish believed in the possibility of the transmigration of the soul from one human body to another, there is no suggestion in Gaelic literature that Deirdre had a previous existence. Draupadī, on the other hand, certainly lived at least one earlier life-span. Her birth to the King of Pāñcāla is clearly miraculous ; in the strict sense she is not his daughter : she is of divine origin, emerging from the sacred fire. That Deirdre in some long-lost tradition dating back to pre-Christian Ireland, might have had divine associations, is not impossible. Modern scholars like Dumézil and Mac Cúna are convinced that many of the characters in Gaelic heroic poetry, presented as historical, are in fact euhemerized divine beings. It must be remembered that Irish heroic poetry was first committed to writing by clerics of the early centuries of Christianity in Ireland.

While they preserve the vigour and valour of the heroic tales with a due measure of epic exaggeration, they frequently fail to mention the original 'divine' origin of many of their characters. Older works of lesser literary merit list gods and goddesses of ancient Ireland whose attributes and special functions match or approximate those of the heroes and heroines of the better known sagas. Thus Medb, whether Medb of Cruachan or Medb Lethderg, is almost certainly the divine symbol of sovereignty, the goddess who must wed the lawful king before he can ascend the throne. Cúchulainn, the champion of the *Táin* is probably the son of Ler, the god of the sea, and Yeats has possibly this in mind when he sends him to meet his death fighting the waves, maddened by the discovery that he had slain his own son, begotten on the warrior woman, Aoife, herself of super-human origin.

The monastic scribes while preserving the oral tradition for posterity were not unmindful of their pre-Christian origin and with an eye to protecting the new faith flourishing in the land, played down the religious significance of characters and events in the lays and sagas. This censorship has resulted in a literature that is almost entirely devoid of any philosophical or theological background or framework. In this it differs greatly from the *Mahābhārata* or the *Rāmāyaṇa*; a reading of these great epics is in itself an enriching spiritual experience. Draupadī and Sitā are more than symbols of feminine dignity or marital fidelity. They represent a way of life with a whole system of values and beliefs. Deirdre, on the other hand, while she symbolizes the strength of love, independence of mind and tragic heroism is in many respects amoral. There is no religious context, no faith-structure within which her actions take place. Despite her destiny, she is an individual seeking her own freedom and her own happiness, while Draupadī and Sitā are solemnly conscious of their duties as wives, mothers and queens. One reason suggested for this is that while the Indian epics have been transmitted orally and in written form through a succession of persons of the same philosophy and faith, the Gaelic oral tradition was set down in writing for the first time by a society that no longer lived by the norms that moulded the original creation, a society that had in fact rejected them. So we are presented with a very human, often charming Deirdre who chooses a young nobleman in preference to the elderly reigning king. She will re-emerge as Gráinne choosing a

young warrior, Diarmait, despite her pledge to the veteran leader of the warrior band, the great Finn of Fianna. And later she will undergo a more elaborate transformation as Iseult bringing grief and death (not to mention ecstasy) to Tristan, the trusted friend of Mark, the husband they betray. The virtues of courage, loyalty, open-heartedness and the force of passion, betrayal and treachery set against them, represent a programme of heroic conduct and its contrary, rather than a way of life based on religious convictions. There is a secular quality about the events of the *Táin* despite the occasional flash of magic or the warnings of a seer or the fulfilment of a prophecy. The gods are discreetly in the background and God has not yet been introduced. In the *Nibelungenlied* we have something almost similar. The Siegfried-Gunther-Kriemhild-Brünhild story is patently 'pagan'. So is the Kriemhild-Etzel story. Yet we find Christian ceremonies framing some of the incidents and an objection to Kriemhild's marriage to the 'pagan' Etzel being forestalled by a Rüdiger who has some of the best qualities of a crusader. The Christian framework into which the two separate pre-Christian tales are set is quite inadequate if the late 12th century poet hoped to give more than a sprinkling of holy water to the old tales. The Irish monks, on the whole, were wiser, though there are occasional attempts at a Christian turn to some of the incidents. The tales of the Fenian cycle are told to St Patrick, and Oisín returns from the Celtic Otherworld so that baptism may transfer him to the Christian Heaven—a tribute of appreciation of the nobility of the Fianna, rather than a condemnation of an earlier religious system! But, on the whole, the secular tone prevails and we read the ancient legends of the Gaels for entertainment, for a glimpse into prehistory, for pictures of heroic warriors and fascinating women. It would be worse than useless to expect to meet Dharma or to try to find a Gaclic Draupadī following Dharma, rather than Madana, into the forest. Deirdre and Draupadī have different concepts of love, though both are capable of strong, enduring love. They are both unfailingly loyal where they have pledged loyalty, but Deirdre refuses to acknowledge a claim made on her before her birth. Perhaps it is because she has lived outside society that she can flout its norms with such impunity, while Draupadī has known the bonds of family and kindred and accepted those ties as sacred. Deirdre's life is short, tempestuous and tragic. Draupadī lives on into old age, through a long

span of varied experiences—joy, sorrow, separation and costly victory—following her husbands into the forest, the palace, the silent battlefield when the war is over and finally on the last journey to Heaven. Though she had chosen Arjuna for her husband, it was to Yudhiṣṭhira she was first given ; though it was Bhīma who loved her best it was still Arjuna who held the dearest place in her heart—to the last, to her death on the high places of the final journey. The “calm of mind, all passion spent” which we might have expected after the final forest sojourn was not possible even for the consort of Dharma—Yudhiṣṭhira, the child of the gods, until she had passed beyond the cycle of change into the changelessness of eternity. Had she lost all her husbands, as she did all her sons, on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, could Draupadī have gone on living ? Or would she, like Deirdre, have sprung from the victor’s chariot to join them in the world beyond ? The only answer is that there is no answer. These great old tales with their rather uniformly heroic men and their fascinatingly enigmatic women are beyond the reach of our petty questioning. If we approach them with reverence in our critical hearts they will reveal to us something of their magic and mystery, enough, just enough to whet our appetite for more !

TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH

A NOTE ON THE PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

Lakshmi Kannan

The following words are attributed to Karl Max : "The thief, the translator and the seller are necessary for 19th century European colonial enterprise, for all the three categories were volunteers from among people undergoing colonization." To colonize the world and more important, to communicate amongst themselves within this vast world community, the value of translation cannot be underestimated. Clubbing the thief with the translator, one could also recall the Italian proverb : "The translator is a traitor !"

Thanks to the Indian Sahitya Akademi which set out early to "work actively for the development of Indian letters and to set high literary standards, to foster and co-ordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them all the cultural unity of the country"¹, we now have a body of Indian literature that comprises many Indian languages. *Indian Literature*, the Akademi's journal, significantly published in English, provides us with a good forum for literary works in various languages in their English translation. The UNESCO also, with its collection of Representative Works, has placed some significant modern Indian classics on the world map. While the National Book Trust selects major Indian literary works for translation, it seldom commissions them in English. Besides, what continues painfully through the times is a tacit belief somewhere deep down in us that an author has to be properly dead before his work is grudgingly accepted for translation. Failing that, he has to gain respectability through any of the awards by nationally instituted committees. This unfounded belief is sometimes manifest in the selection of books.

This paper focuses mainly on translations in English, with a bias to those from Tamil. I however hope to be forgiven for generalizing upon them and for glossing over other regional languages.

In the current climate of eroded (or should we call it 'crowded') culture, one is tempted to make use of the viability of English as a very suitable link language, which brings us to the innate translatability of a work, in other words, its 'English potential'. Some literary works may lend themselves into English easily enough on the lexical level while some others, on the surface, may offer some resistance. They may be either culture-bound or have narrow ethnic interests. Or

they may be too esoteric for a particular milieu and the language may be so peculiar to the flavour of a particular district that it may lose a large part of it when rendered into English. Also, certain stubborn ethnic items ingrained in the very genius and eccentricity of a language with all its innate idiosyncrasy may pose difficulties for the translation. Yet, little extra care and imagination may yield a rich harvest in terms of an enlarged readership, sections of which may turn out to be even more responsive than the regional group of the language, to some subtle elements of the ethos which has surfaced delicately in English. Here, the translation can be done at the level of thought, conception or emotion and not merely on the level of words.

One has to, however, avoid works that are cloaked in a linguistic or semantic finality and choose instead works that offer potential interest to pan-Indian and possibly foreign readers. Works, in other words, that may prove to have an enduring merit. Once this crucial question of choice and selection has been surmounted, then we move on to the 'how' and the 'why' of the kind of transformation a translator can bring about with the book. When it comes to proverbs or idioms, for instance, one is obliged to find neat synonyms for certain highly ethnic expressions in the source language. To cite some rather commonplace examples, expressions like 'pearls before swine' or 'holier than thou' cannot find regional counterparts. Apart from this, on a more general plane, English can miss out on some tonal rhythms ingrained in Tamil. But one need not lament over these. One should, instead, find alternate rhythms in the target language.

A good translation unravels the very essence of a book. One may recall the words of Isaac Bashevis Singer who, while speaking of literary translations, said: "My translators are my best critics ... Also, translation undresses a literary work, shows it in its true nakedness. An author may fool himself in his own language, but many of his shortcomings become clear to him in another language. Translation tells the bitter truth."⁹ Singer adds, "At a lecture I was once asked: 'What would you do if you were to meet God face-to-face?' And my answer was: 'I would ask him to collaborate with me on some translations.' I would not trust him to do it himself."⁸

The end product of translation should have a heuristic quality by which it 'discovers' the work for us, once again. A work can take a rebirth, or a second birth in another language, earning for itself a

new set of heterogenous readers particularly if the target language happens to be an international one, like English or French. It will bring in its wake some fresh insights and perceptions. This way, even classical or ancient literature is rediscovered and brought to the attention of contemporary readers. At any rate, this should be an ideal well worth pursuing, with or without the active collaboration of the original author.

We see then, how the onus of the work rests on the translator. And broadly speaking, there can be four main kinds of translators :

- (a) One who has found translation potential in a work and undertakes to translate it purely as a labour of love.
- (b) One who translates mainly for money (one likes to assume that there are not many of this kind).
- (c) The author-translator, who is ostensibly comfortable in both the languages he deals with and who would really prefer to do the translation on his own.
- (d) The same translator, a creative writer on his own, who may also occasionally undertake translating other people's works, or any significant work that comes his way. He would have the added advantage of having an active skill in both the languages of operation, instead of merely a passive 'receptivity' in one of them. A translator of literary works (as contrasted with technical government or corporate news bulletins, reports or advertisement copy for commercial translations) should be alert to the demands of this arduous task. For he has to raise himself to the level of the dual responsibility :

(a) Of capturing the tone and spirit of the original work and the author's work, then (b) to anticipate a new set of readers who can be visualized for the re-born book. His responsibility here extends to himself too, for he has to be 'true' to himself and find his own identity in the very act of translation. One has to talk of identity a little strongly here, for there is a faint belief afloat, a totally misguided belief, that translation is a relatively inferior activity and that it is only a frustrated writer who would spend his time translating other people's works. We could probably focus on his identity obliquely, vis-a-vis translations in English.

Ideally, the translator in English, we are told, should be highly

proficient in English, having been a critic of sorts, or an editor, or a practised teacher of English at a senior level, with many research papers, if not books, to his credit. Yet in practice, we often note that all these formidable recommendations are not proof against some lapses in the execution, nor do good translators conform to these man-made stipulations. These desirable points of eligibility do not always, as a rule, contribute to an inspired translation. The latter calls for that extra something, that extra excitement that the work together with the translator's temperament makes for a spark, a spark that is to be sustained till the job is done. The proficiency in English can also vary in degree, depending upon individual skill and style.

The translator's model, ideally, should be the tone, texture and quality of an original work in English, known for its literary merit. It should resemble an original work in English and obliterate, as far as possible, all signs of translation. In fact, it should not read like a translation at all. While being alert to the sharply varying demands made by the particular work, care should be taken to avoid an archaic or antique style, to save the book from wearing a film of anachronism. For instance, it is often observed that translating prose fiction is relatively easier than translating verse or plays. Although there may be a number of examples to endorse this, there is this fact to contend with—that is, prose fiction in itself can be widely different, ranging from the racy, the slick, the poetic to the very flat and perilously straight language that we have normally come to associate with prose. This is also inexplicably tied up with the accessibility of published translation. It has largely to do with a publisher's bias. For novels are more favoured by publishers than short stories or verse. Novels and books are more readily available in book form than poems or individual short stories. Particularly the latter tend to get dispersed in magazines or sunday magazine sections of newspapers. Sujit Mukherjee thoughtfully recommends an ICCR compilation called *Aspects of Indian Culture*⁴ for the collector and the interested scholar.

We now have a corpus of translation in English that can cohesively go to make a body of Indian literature in English. It is now to be seen if a readership, special and exclusive to the tone and texture of a translated work is easy to locate. Maybe not. After getting into problems of semantics regarding Indo-Anglian as against Indo-

English literature, with people now showing a marked preference for the second term, it can now be taken broadly as a national body of literature, essentially a literature linked by the language of English. This body of literature, however, continues to run into problems of a rather typical nature with publishers here. It assumes the prerequisite of publishers who may harbour some spirit of adventure, if not the more lofty emotions of nationalism or patriotism (once again, this may be too much to ask of a person who has to make a living out of his publishing). Very few of the publishers are prepared to take a calculated risk in the name of originality or genuine talent or noteworthiness. They may lack either or both the resources and the inclination of talent scouting. So they easily fall back upon the prestige of state or national awards, or on books that have inspired a movie-maker to produce a regional film remarkable enough to win another award. Invariably, this criterion seems to eclipse others and continues to motivate and energize the publishers to get such works translated.

Now the definition of Indo-English literature has to be stretched considerably to include good Indian works in translations of quality. This may take time, what with the grudging attention of readers, scholars and critics who take pride in showing their acquaintance with English and European works, and who do not even manage to camouflage with sophistication a rather shameful disinterest in things indigenously Indian.

Although English translations of Indian works are now legion, we are yet to evolve a system of study that is organized intelligently. If the creative scene for translation leaves much room for improvement, the critical scene for the same is equally depressing largely because for some obscure reason, it seems to be condescending and repetitive. The fact that a work is translated primarily for the reader who does not know the language of the original, is quickly lost sight of by the self-styled critic (euphemistically so called, but otherwise a mere occasional hack-reviewer and a non-specialist) who, for the *n*th time, would find the translation wanting, because it 'does not carry the flavour of the original'. A stale statement, tirelessly repeated over the years.

Translated works should be included as a natural extension of a corpus of literature, without grudging the fact that this may entail a double level of existence for the translated work, one in its own

language and one in the translated one. But that is literature for you, something phenomenal that is born again and again and yet again.

NOTES

1 The Akademi catalogue.

2 "On Translating My Books", in *The World of Translation* (New York, 1971), p. 111. *loc. cit.* Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on Indian Literature in English Translation* (Delhi, 1981), p. 32.

3 Ibid.

4 (New Delhi, 1972).

PASTICHE AND CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Jaidev

Pastiche, *per se*, is comparative literature. It is comparative both in its composition and its reception. The present essay is an attempt to define afresh pastiche, against the perspective provided by contemporary fiction. The chosen perspective is an admission of the present writer's limitations; and it is not to be inferred that the theoretical premises here cannot be extended to other genres or other periods. Pastiche, I think, requires a redefinition because although it does share certain common ground and can co-operate with its kin parody, the two are not synonymous.¹ In fact, the reason for the neglect of pastiche lies in critics' simplistic synonymizing of the two terms. It is also not uncommon to see critics discounting pastiche as a low form of parody.² Robert Burden is one of the few critics who recognize the need to keep the term separate. While his chief concern, like most others', is with parody, he distinguishes pastiche from parody. He calls parody subversive and pastiche non-subversive: "deliberate pastiche is often a far from negative device: it may be used to stress the ironic awareness that language, literary form, themes and motifs regularly come to the writer in, so to speak, second-hand form."³ Burden rightly relates pastiche with the writer's recognition of influence, but then proceeds to include 'the anxiety of influence' from where the subversion of influence, peculiar to parody, is but one step. This essay therefore devotes considerable space to separating the two terms before reaching a workable and distinct definition of pastiche and discussing its implications for fiction.

But first of all, two issues which this essay does not discuss except in passing. One, pastiche in life-contexts carries a derogatory connotation. There it signifies something made-up, derivative, patchy, insincere, and so on. Although the term came from art, from 'pasticcio analogem' in painting, now art adopts its present life-connotation while imitating life. Thus, in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* the unnamed heroine damns a character for being pastiche: "The power flowed into my eyes, I could see into him, he was an imposter, a pastiche, layers of political handbills, pages from magazines, *affichés*, verbs and nouns glued on him and shredding away, the original surface littered with fragments and tatters..."⁴

In such a realistic-satiric stance, the novelist approaches pastiche as part of his or her material. This essay deals with pastiche as a formal, generic preoccupation of the novelist.

The second issue this essay does not discuss is related to the now fairly current clichés of structuralism and deconstructionism according to which the condition of writing is a condition of re-writing, all literature is essentially parodic, one myth or another underlies all fiction, repetition can be alogical, and so on. While these might overwhelm one with their umbrella of philosophical, ontological and epistemological suggestion, they seldom provide a viable methodology needed for approaching literary texts. This essay is concerned with repetitions and reconstructions, but does not take these terms to mean such repetitions or reconstructions as defy logical perception. My stance throughout is formal in the non-Russian sense.

Pastiche is an inevitable result of formalism in art. The logic which underlies art's wish to distance itself from life and instead seek a separate, arty, autonomous identity and culture for itself leads it, by stages, towards self-consciousness, self-reflexiveness and self-mimicry. Pastiche, like parody, refers to the last stage, self-mimicry, where art disqualifies itself from life and turns, self-consciously, to its own past in search of its material. "The Adventure of a Photographer" in Italo Calvino's *Difficult Loves* provides a haunting image for the pasticheur. Antonino begins by taking pictures of his friend, then turns to photographing her absence, and ultimately takes to photographing photographs: "Having exhausted every possibility, at the moment when he was coming full circle, Antonino realized that photographing photographs was the only course that he had left, or rather the true course he had obscurely sought all this time."⁸ A photographer photographing photographs is a perfect metaphor for the pasticheur who similarly abandons all concern with reality and opts for 'imitating' pre-existent art.

What makes pastiche and parody near kins? The answer is: their formal self-consciousness which takes the form of mimicry. Neither attempts a mere distancing of reality. In fact, each undermines reality as a valid object of imitation by foregrounding technique. Not the photographed photographs but the act of photographing becomes the subject in both pastiche and parody. Both point to how and with what means and mechanisms they tackle the target texts. It is technique which they lay bare and which

becomes their chief concern. The basic drive in both is towards zeroing the significance of the target material as material and magnifying that of how they handle that material, through mimicry that is. It is in mimicry, not in imitation, that the presentational skill and technique are pushed to the fore ; and this is why one should not confound the terms with imitation.

Mimicry, self-conscious mimicry, indeed mimicry as self-consciousness, is the common ground pastiche and parody share. Mimicry is the mode in both ; and predictably the two are often present in the same work. Not mutually exclusive, they can co-exist as well as co-operate. However, pastiche and parody differ in their aspirations, in the purposes for which they use mimicry. Mimicry is perhaps seldom innocent, it tends to be subversive. In parody, the subversive intention of mimicry is the most important thing. It subverts its target/s but also offers an alternative, 'reformed' (reformed after dismantling and 'desacralizing') text which is supposed to be superior to the target text in ideology, assumptions, norms, etc. This means, parody postulates a universe where values exist, the new text itself suggesting them by the act of subverting the old one whose values have been found not quite valid. Very much is wrong with the past, but through questioning, dismantling, subverting it, something right can be constructed. There is a point in in Ruthrof's argument that parody always transcend the structures it ridicules. In parody, mimicry becomes subversive, subversion becomes advance.

John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a good example of such subversive mimicry. The novel is unmistakably self-conscious right from the start where, in a sort of prefatory note, "The author and publisher assure the reader that there are no pagination errors in the final chapter of this story," until the end where Fowles offers two endings, one Victorian and the other Existential, for the reader's consideration and choice. Then, there are places in the book where the author drops the spoof realistic mantle and takes the reader into confidence, discusses the formal conventions underneath Victorian fiction, and explains the difficulties involved in pretending to be a Victorian novelist while actually living "in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes". But for these asides, the book would be an elaborate pastiche : after all, the plot is Victorian, the the texture is Victorian, but mimicry is the

mode, and the book never intends the reader to forget that it is all a performance, a clever game. However, the game is ultimately subversive. In the asides, the novel is something of a grand inquest. Victorian fiction, but also Victorian society whose ideology that fiction projects, are interrogated and dismantled from within, as it were. This resembles a version of Eliot's tradition as encountered by a revolutionary individual artist.

The prudish puritanity we lend to the Victorians, and rather lazily apply to all classes of Victorian society, is in fact a middle-class view of the middle-class ethos. Dickens's working-class characters are all funny (or very pathetic) and an incomparable range of grotesques, but for the cold reality we need to go elsewhere—to Meyhew, the great Commission Reports and the rest; and nowhere more than in this sexual aspect of their lives, which Dickens...and his compeers so totally bowdlerized. The hard...fact of Victorian rural England was that what a simpler age called 'testing before you buy' (premarital intercourse, in our current jargon) *was the rule, not the exception.*⁶

Fowles in the novel operates at two dimensions: fictional and social. Writing in 1967, he brings a comparatist gaze to his subject. His intention here is not only to subvert our notions about Victorian literature and society, it is also to make us conscious of how erroneous sometimes our perceptions of our own reality can be. Thus, mimicry for Fowles becomes the chief means of transcending through subversion his Victorian target. Self-consciousness, both at the formal and the social dimensions, plays havoc with the typical Victorian novel, a combination, of Hardy and Dickens, exposes its falsity, and then offers its 'work' as a parallel, a superior text. Its gameyness gets subordinated to its subversive intent, its desire to become *the* right Victorian novel as it ought to have been.

By contract, pastiche is at once a more modest and a more disturbing phenomenon. It is also less pretentious. Pastiche is more modest because, even while its target gets subverted, pastiche appears to be almost grateful to it for inspiring itself, pastiche that is. In fact, whatever subversiveness accompanies pastiche accompanies it without its really insisting on it. Mimicry-based as it is, it cannot help affecting the target; but it does not judge the target. Those who realize how mimicry can be a gesture partaking of recognition and even affection will have no difficulty in grasping the instinct behind pastiche. Pastiche mimics, distorts, dismantles, deconstructs before rearranging, recycling and re-forming its target,

but it does all this without getting involved in value-judgements. Mimicry here includes homage. The assumption in pastiche is simple : no form, theme, convention, structure, or register exhausts its potential just in one use ; each can be explored endlessly, its fragments can be rearranged in ever-fresh combinations. In other words, the past is not immutable, but can be reactivated, recycled, reclaimed. In a way, variations on myths and archetypes involve a similar activity. Pastiche differs from these in being candid about how it reactivates and reclaims the past ; technique here is always foregrounded, the reader never allowed to suspend his disbelief. Close to the bric-a-brac method, pastiche justifies itself in terms of pure formal delight such rearrangements bring. Unlike parody, pastiche is modest enough not to claim for itself a superior status. Pastiche is closer to game and role-playing. What is more, it displays roles for roles, game for game. And if cannot help subverting its target, it almost wilfully makes itself, too, subvertible and dismantlable. Even when it appears to transcend the target, it is essentially self-subversive.

Pastiche is also more disturbing than parody because it denies solidity, meaning, significance, values, authenticity. It dismantles past fictions, but makes it clear that it, too, is fiction and, therefore, susceptible to similar dismantlings. Indeed, one way of seeing pastiche would be to note its implicit assumption that no fiction, including itself, is solid or 'meaning'-ful. All is performance, presentation, role-playing. The pasticheur who is all the time showing how he is playing his role while his characters play theirs cannot help extending the role-logic to the target text, too. Muriel Spark's *Not to Disturb* has a character named Lister who pastiches Spark herself and like her anticipates the *crime passionnel* which will end in death for his employer, a baron, his wife, and their joint lover. If Spark is using the violent events for her pastiche fiction, Lister too is preparing recorders and cameras for a planned film. Self-consciousness here combines with self-reflexiveness (the novel is in the present tense and the future is rightly taken for granted as though it were already past.) Dister is not bothered about the imminent tragedy ; he is actually more concerned with how the film will be organised : "The film is in our pocket...The only problem is the casting. You have to have everyone younger then they are. If Hadrian plays Lister, Pablo could play Hadrian." The film is

complete even before the casting is done. The scripts are ready, and they are all that matters. Given the right script, anyone can play anyone else's role. Roles are all, identities only a pack of cards, shufflable and reshufflable. Italo Calvino provides apt metaphors for pastiche. In *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, the Tarot cards remain constant, but a fresh narrative gets generated every time they are shuffled and arranged. And in *Invisible Cities*, Calvino's Kublai Khan provides a definitional insight into the nature and functioning of pastiche: "Kublai Khan had noticed that Marco Polo's cities resembled one another, as if the passage from one to another involved not a journey but a change of elements. Now, from each city Marco described to him, the Great Khan's mind set out on its own, and after dismantling the city piece by piece, he reconstructed it in other ways, substituting components, shifting them, inverting them." At another place, Marco Polo describes the glorious city of Clarice where the rule is "to shuffle [a given number of objects] each time, then try to reassemble them."⁸

Shuffling, dismantling, reconstructing, reassembling—these are the acts involved in pastiche. No originality, no authenticity; Scholes' 'defence of Federman's plagiarism applies to pastiche as well: "Imagination feeds on previous imagination...Since plagiarism is inevitable, [Federman] says, relax and enjoy it. Away with anxiety, he says: let us manipulate the old contours with confidence that there is nothing new under the fictional sun."⁹ Manipulating the old contours involves no originality, but still it offers considerable freedom and challenge to a writer to reconstruct fresh forms. Pastiche asks the writer to cry out techniques, deform and reform, alter emphasis and change focus, improvise and (perhaps) interpret. Pastiche thus celebrates technique. And since technique can dismantle anything including itself, pastiche implicitly questions the very idea of solid fiction. No fiction is anything but fragile. At the same time, thanks to technique, it is capable of enduring for ever, as it were.

Pastiche offers promise to fiction in general and old forms in particular. Yet it is a bleak genre, for it reduces life to a set of gestures, identity to mere roles, and the moral universe to a valueless void. A highly disturbing pastiche fiction is Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat*. It comes close to transcending its borrowed structures and motifs, comes close to being almost a metaphysical thriller, but

cruelly subverts itself in the last lines. The novel lifts motifs from two rather low-grade sub-genres, murder mystery and boy-meets-girl romance. To these motifs it adds an enormous amount of self-consciousness and self-reflexiveness. The novel is in the present tense which disposes of all authorial self-concealment, especially as the narrative is disrupted again and again by two novelist's 'flash forwards' which are in the future tense and thus are expressive of the fictional fact that the plot is the characters' destiny and it is created by the author who is the God(dess) of her fictional universe. It is revealed quite early in the novel that Lise the heroine "will be found tomorrow morning dead from multiple stab-wounds, her wrists bound with a silk scarf and her ankles bound with a man's necktie, in the grounds of an empty villa, in a park of the foreign city to which she is travelling." As though Lise herself has heard or overheard the novelist's plan for her, she frantically searches for the man who is destined to be her murderer. She eventually discovers him, and pushes him into fulfilling their destinies, the novelist's plot. Very, very carefully she instructs him into playing rapist-murderer.

'I'm going to lie down here. Then you tie my hands with my scarf ; I'll put one wrist over the other, it's the proper way. Then you'll tie my ankles together with your neck-tie. Then you strike. She points first to her throat. 'First here,' she says. Then, pointing to a place beneath each breast, she says, 'Then here,' she says, 'and here. Then any where you like ..After you have stabbed,' she says, 'be sure to twist it upwards or it may not penetrate far enough.' She demonstrates the movement with her wrist.¹⁰

The borrowed motifs are here all inverted, turned topsy-turvy. The murderer shakes in fear and wants to evade his role ; the victim forces him into murdering her. The strategies of suspense, peculiar to suspense stories, are here all discarded by introducing the end right near the beginning. The plot is exposed, the author is exposed with all her prerogatives, and the heroine is made almost aware of her function in the plot, which is to die as victim. The scripts have been readied and the characters reduced to mere players who must play out their scripts to the bloody end. With no suspense, the entire interest—and the book is absolutely hypnotic—shifts to the how of it all. The technique and skill are thus fore-grounded. But what happens to Lise ? She, once she has sensed her destiny, begins to pastiche it, shuffling and inverting its motifs, thus pre-empting it of meaning and significance. She retains the overall design, her destiny,

but explodes from within the murder motifs, picks up the fragments and finally reconstructs a fresh design which only seemingly resembles the authorial design, seemingly because what is supposed to be a murder preceded by rape becomes here something of a suicide, a self-sacrifice. However, in pastiching the authorial design, she yet remains within it and seems to be acting out a pastiche role, the role of a pastiche author. And, of course, the novelist playing God has the final word: in that, she gives us a stylised but inverted pastiche of Aristotle's definition of tragedy ruling out pity or fear for Lise. The possibilities of transcendence are thus subverted by the novelist within the text itself. Lise is just not allowed to become a free character. In fact, in her last speech she advises the man to flee, though in the same breath she warns that he will be caught. Why run then? For that way he will have an illusion of freedom. But, the illusion itself is denied, for already, in another future-tense prophecy, the novelist has described the scene in which he is being interrogated by police. Freedom is a fiction; the illusion of freedom is disposed of; he runs only because the script demands it.

Two things need to be noted here. One, the novel's self-consciousness reduces its characters to mere utility-items, but their reduction finally implicates the novelist, too, whose pastiche stance shows her for what she is, a mimic and role-player. Like Lise, she too has sensed her script and has the freedom only to reshuffle and reconstruct it, but no freedom to do something original or authentic. And two, there is no attempt in the novel to degrade the target texts. Aristotle is pastiched much in the same way as the Women's Liberation rhetoric, crime thriller, or boy-meets-girl romance. Unlike parody, pastiche has no use for judgements, moral or aesthetic.

The pleasure of pastiche is formal, not moral. Pastiche acts against meaning, against contentism and content-significance. A good example is Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* where a most banal incident—a bus passenger's queer hat and his being observed a little later in a Paris square by the other passengers—is presented from ninety nine different viewpoints—ignorant, dreamily, animistic, apostrophic (sic.), retrogressive, personal, metaphoric, official, and so on.¹¹ The work is a grand stylistic performance; it is the stylistic pastiche which is consistently foregrounded, with the result that the incident loses all its intrinsic value. In Borges's "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," pastiche zeroes the meaning of exercises in

meaning itself. Mimicry remains its *raison d'être* ; what can one make of : "Cervantes's text and Menard's are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer" ? Or of : "My undertaking is not difficult, essentially...I should only have to be immortal to carry it out" ?¹² A highly self-conscious performance, "Pierre Menard" explodes the quest for meaning from within by mimicking it. Indeed, the editor's locations of meanings declare, in anticipation, pasticheurs all those who would like to locate epistemological or receptional meanings in the piece. Pierre Menard's mysterious duty to reconstruct literally *Don Quixote* stands as an extreme image for the pasticheur who destroys the meaning-possibility but draws attention to the highly formal game he plays.

It is only a naive reader—and pastiche is not for naive readers—who will search for content or meaning in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. The real subject here is suggested in the following lines from the framed poem, "Pale Fire" :

I feel I understand
Existence, or at least a minute part
of my existence, only through art,
In terms of combinational delight ;
And if my private universe scans right,
So does the verse of galaxies divine
Which I suspect is an iambic line.

John Shade is a formalist, almost with a vengeance. Not only does he rest satisfied in his aesthetic universe, he is keen on aestheticising the galaxies themselves. The key phrase in the above passage is combinational delight which neatly sums up the drive behind pastiche. Combinational delight, not inventive or creative delight, informs pastiche exercises. An example of this delight occurs quite early in the Pastiche poem : "the frame house between/Goldsworth and Wordsmith on its square of green" (ll. 47-48). Each detail here is loaded with formal significance and self-consciousness. The house, in a self-reflexive reference to the poem itself, is a frame house, and its position, a reference to the poem's position, pastiche position, in the history of English poetry, is between Goldsmith and Wordsworth who are both combined and reconstructed as Goldsworth and Wordsmith. Charles Kinbote, the pastiche combination of commentator, king, and lunatic, playfully identifies Goldsworth and Wordsmith on the American map, but evidently does not want the reader to take him seriously. Who cares for their locations when the attention is

wholly usurped by the combinational game of Kinbote who thus duplicates the activity of the poet? Kinbote's commentary is an exercise in mammoth irrelevancy from the meaning angle. But then to expect meaning here is to be naive. Its pleasure lies in its extension in prose of Shade's combinational principle.

We shall accompany Gradus [the assassin whose assignment is to kill the fugitive king of Zembla] in constant thought, as he makes his way from distant dim Zembla to green Appalachia, through the entire length of the poem, following the road of its rhythm, riding past in a rhyme, skidding around the corner of a run-on, breathing with the caesura, swinging down to the foot of the page from line to line as from branch to branch, hiding between two words (see note to line 596), reappearing on the horizon of a new canto, steadily marching nearer in iambic motion, crossing streets...¹⁸

This is a more wordy, more prosaic version of Shade's combinational activity in which skill comes to the fore. The commentary is a pastiche structure combining modes and motifs from academic scholarship, biography, and assassination plots. The result is a formal but meaningless universe in which everything points to the grand pasticheure, Nabokov, who is not in the least willing to grant the reader a suspension of disbelief. Realism achieves its effects by constantly suppressing its inner formal conventions, by concealing its artifice and madeupness. Pastiche runs counter to realism; it flaunts its artifice, mechanics and operational principle. It exults in exposing its self.

It is, I think, now possible to state a fairly workable definition of pastiche. Pastiche is a formally self-conscious, self-exhibitionistic genre which dismantles pre-existing art to combine its motifs and conventions into fresh reconstructions and rearrangements for combinational delight. It sometimes subverts the pre-existent art but does not claim to be in any way superior or less-subvertible: rather, it often negates itself. It always denies meaning or significance by constantly foregrounding the technique and skill it uses in its mimicry. It is different from parody by virtue of its staying value-free; and those who call literary parody neutral or non-judgemental¹⁴ describe pastiche, not parody.

It has already been shown that pastiche and parody are not incompatible. The example of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* demonstrated that pastiche can exist in a subordinate position to parody. Contrastively, pastiche can also contain parody. For example, John

Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* is primarily a pastiche work, but it allows parody at places to take over. The novel combines modes and motifs borrowed from many different sources : science fiction, fable, The Bible, *Oedipus Rex*, Swift, campus fiction, and picaresque fiction. The book is framed between a Publisher's Disclaimer and a Cover-Letter to the Editors and Publisher on one side, and a Posttape, a Postscript to the Posttape, and a Footnote to the Postscript to the Posttape, on the other. The hero, a pastiche combination of Oedipus, Jesus Christ, a goat, and a picaro, is pastiche also in the sense that his mother was impregnated by a giant computer. Parody here judges the inhuman computer, the rather irrelevant religion and its miracles, and the politics of the Big Powers. But the work remains pastiche in its overall intent, a self-conscious and formal performance in which the principle of assembling the fragments from past forms remains inescapably present before the reader.

Our Founder, who art omniscient
 Commenced by The name,
 Thy College come, Thy Assignments done
 On Campus as beyond the Gate.
 Give us this term Thy termly word.
 And excuse our cribbing,
 As we excuse classmates who crib from us.
 Lead us not into procrastination,
 But deliver us from error :
 For Thine is the rank, tenure, and seniority, for ever.
 So pass us.¹⁵

Now, this improvisation on the Lord's Prayer might well appear to be a joke. In fact, that is precisely the point behind much of the novel. Through pastiche, the novel seeks to erase its content-significance, wishes to be projected as a game. The term game does not signify something careless or easy ; it points to the rigour and discipline the game involves. But it denies significance.

John Barth's name is frequently invoked in connection with the phrase 'the literature of exhaustion' which is the title of one of his essays on contemporary fiction. In a sense, pastiche also is the literature of exhaustion. Only, one should not take too seriously the despair implied by the phrase. For Barth qualifies it by adding that exhaustion is "by no means necessarily a cause for despair".¹⁶ Literature might be exhausted or used up, but thanks to its potential

like parody, is one way it gets replenished. It is rather misleading to suggest that Barth "uses traditional concepts of character and form...as a means of parodying the conventions themselves and thus calling attention to their essential irrelevance to the contemporary world."¹⁷ The observation might apply to someone like Fowles who is really discarding the irrelevant conventions and substituting for them the relevant ones. But Barth is essentially a pasticheur grateful really to the past conventions which can be pastiched in fresh forms. Judgement, are foreign to Barth; delight, almost glee, is essential. To call Barth a parodist is to solemnize the otherwise gamey, exuberant mimic-tone that informs books like *The Sot-Weed Factor*, *Giles Goat-Boy* and *Chimera*.

It is perhaps worthwhile to attempt here an imaginary ladder of pastiche, the steps here being only convenient grades in an otherwise fluid continuum. Pure pastiche with its rationale in combinational delight and gamey mimicry would represent the highest step in the ladder; pastiche co-existing with parody would be the second highest step; pastiche juxtaposed with realism in a tense, uneasy relationship, as in, say, Angus Wilson's *No Laughing Matter*, would be the third step; and pastiche used merely as a content-motif in a realistic-moral text, like David Storey's *Pasmore*, would be the lowest. The third step deserves a little elaboration, for many novelists today prefer it. Pastiche here generates tension between form and content. The novelist's realism pulls the work lifewards, pastiche pulls it towards art. The novelist may prefer to keep the tension intact right until the end; or else, he may use pastiche with its formal tendency as an alienation device, as a means of dislocating the reader's expectations or subverting his complacency.

A few other points can now be lined up without elaboration. Pastiche can function at any dimension in a narrative: linguistic as in Sandy's reconstructing the Lady of Shalott in Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*; situational as in Wilson's depicting the killing of six kittens in terms and motifs lifted from the Duncan's murder scene in his *No Laughing Matter*; characterizational, as in Barthelme's modernizing Snow White in his novel of the same name; structural as in David Lodge's use of the structure of Arthurian romances for portraying the academic charades of literature professors and critics in *Small World*; and so on. The point

is that pastiche cannot be appreciated, will indeed be mis-read, unless the reader reads it comparatively, for its pleasure comes from our recognizing what technique does to the target texts.

Finally, a few words on the implications of pastiche for fiction. Pastiche can be a means of renewing and reactivating old forms. Since pastiche carries a double strain, tension is inbuilt in it. This double strain can also be an economic way of suggesting the whole ambience of the target text by just signalling it to the reader who is then expected to recall that text. Pastiche demands a well-informed reader. It "effectively preclude[s] mountebanks, upstarts, thimblerriggers, and persons of inferior education from an understanding of contemporary literature."¹⁸ Pastiche is thus an elitistic genre. It is this very elitism, though, that becomes its damnation too. For it cannot address itself to a large chunk of readership. Finally, the implications of pastiche are very bleak indeed for the traditional attributes of the novel. In its denial of originality, meaning, self, identity, and 'characterhood', pastiche destroys the humanistic basis of liberal realistic fiction.

NOTES

1. J. A. Cudden calls intentional pastiche "a form of parody," *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New Delhi : Andre Deutsch, 1971), p. 125 ; Karl Backson and Arthur Ganz treat pastiche as "a synonym for parody," *A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms : A Dictionary* (1960 ; rpt. London : Thames & Hudson, 1961), p. 158 ; Lee T. Lemon defines pastiche as "a mixture of themes, stylistic elements of subjects borrowed from the works of an artist or of artists for purposes of parody imitation," *A Glossary for the Study of English Literature*, with Preface and Supplement by Shiv K. Kumar (New Delhi : O. U. P., 1974), p. 69 ; Peter Hutchinson groups pastiche with parody and other terms and argues that pastiche goes well with mockery and "satire," *Games Authors Play* (London : Methuen, 1980), p. 96 ; and Margaret A. Rose equates pastiche with parody, both of which according to her are forms of metafiction, *Parody / Metafiction* (London : Croom Helm, 1979), p. 43.

2. See the chapter Parodic Narrative in Herst Ruthrof, *The Reader's Construction of Narrative* (London : RKP, 1981). Apparently more helpful, Harry Levin quotes Andre Malraux's dictum—every artist begins with pastiche—but confounds the distinctions by adding that pastiche includes both "imitation and parody," "The Example of Cervantes : The Novel as Parody," *Perspectives*, 16 (Summer

3. Robert Burden, "The Novel Interrogates Itself : Parody as Self-Consciousness in Contemporary English Fiction," in Malcolm Bradbury and David Falmer, eds., *The Contemporary English Novel*, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies (1979 ; rpt. New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann. 1980), p. 135. For brief but useful insights on pastiche as genre, see F.W. Bateson, *The Scholar-Critic* (London : RKP, 1972), pp. 19-20 ; and Malcolm Bradbury, *Possibilities : Essays on the State of the Novel* (London : O. U. P., 1973), pp. 212, 223-24. Bradbury is especially good in relating pastiche with role-playing.
4. Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (1972 ; rpt. Mankham, Ontario : Papajacks, 1973), pp. 162-63.
5. Italo Calvino, *Difficult Love in Difficult Loves, Smog, A Plunge into Real Estate*, trans. from Italian by William Weaver and D.S. Carne-Ross (London : Secker & Warburg, 1983), p. 52.
6. John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969 ; rpt. London : Panther, 1977), pp. 1, 65, 234.
7. Muriel Spark, *Not to Disturb* (1971 ; rpt. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1974), p. 59.
8. Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. from Italian by William Weaver (1974 ; rpt. London : Picador, 1979), pp. 83, 87.
9. Robert Scholes, *Fabulation and Metafiction* (Urbana : Univ. of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 215.
10. Muriel Spark, *The Driver's Seat* (1970 ; rpt. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1974), pp. 25, 105-106.
11. Raymond Queneau, *Exercises in Style*, trans. from French by B. Wright (London : Gaborbacchus, 1958).
12. Jorge L. Borges, *Labyrinths*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James Irby, Preface by Andre Maurois (1964 ; rpt. Penguin), pp. 69, 66.
13. Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (1962 ; rpt. Penguin), pp. 58, 65.
14. Tuvia Shlonsky, "Literary Parody, Remarks on Its Method and Functions," quoted in Margaret Rose, p. 44.
15. John Harth, *Giles Goat-Boy* (New York : Doubleday, 1966), p. 363.
16. John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," rpt. in Malcolm Bradbury, ed., *The Novel Today : Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction* (London : Fontana, 1977), p. 70.
17. Robert S. Ryf, "Character and Experiment in the Experimental Novel," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 20 (Autumn 1974), 319.
18. Flann O'Brien, *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939 ; rpt. Penguin), p. 25.

Late Father Robert Antoine (1914-81) was a senior teacher of this department. Ron D. K. Banerjee teaches at Smith College, USA. Mythili Kaul is a senior teacher of English at the University of Delhi. K. S. Ramamurti is a senior teacher of English at Bhanethidasan University and presented this paper at Lucknow University in 1982. Swapan Majumdar presented this paper at the Second National Comparative Literature Congress at Tiruchirapalli this year. Sisir Kumar Das presented this paper at a Seminar last October at Leningrad. Alok Bhalla teaches English literature at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad. C. T. Indra teaches English at the University of Madras and presented this paper at the Second National Comparative Literature Congress. Maeve Hughes IBVM is Principal, Loreto College, Calcutta and teaches part-time at the Jadavpur department. Lakshmi Kannan presented this paper at an international conference last year at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Jaidev teaches English at Himachal Pradesh University and presented this paper at the Second National Comparative Literature Congress.

